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MEDITATIONS



M. Feuerstein

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THE HOLY FAMILY

Prayer and work, both united in love, is the story of the happy home at Nazareth.

MEDITATIONS

ON THE
MYSTERIES OF OUR HOLY FAITH
TOGETHER WITH A TREATISE ON MENTAL
PRAYER

BASED ON THE WORK OF THE
VENERABLE FATHER LOUIS DE PONTE, S. J.

BY
REV. C. W. BARRAUD, S. J.

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4591
NEW YORK, CINCINNATI, CHICAGO
BENZIGER BROTHERS

PRINTERS TO THE | PUBLISHERS OF
HOLY APOSTOLIC SEE | BENZIGER'S MAGAZINE

1916

Imprimi Potest.

JOSEPH BROWNE, S.J.

Provincial.

Nihil Obstat.

REMIGIUS LAFORT, S.T.D.

Censor Librorum.

Imprimatur.

✠ JOHN CARDINAL FARLEY,

Archbishop of New York.

NEW YORK, February 2, 1916.

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MEDITATIONS

ON THE

MYSTERIES OF OUR HOLY FAITH

A TREATISE ON MENTAL PRAYER

WHAT IT IS

MENTAL Prayer, or Meditation, is the exercise of the powers of the rational soul, of memory, understanding, and will, about God and the mysteries of the Faith, combined with a close and familiar converse with God. Hence it consists of four parts:

First, the exercise of the memory, whereby the presence of God is realized and the mystery with which we are dealing is recalled point by point and offered to the intellect, together with a living and fervent faith in its truth, for lack of which our attention would soon languish, since what is coldly believed can never be understood. Memory, understanding, and will being interdependent, each becomes in turn predominant, but is not unaided by the others. This act of faith, therefore, must be supplied by the will.

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Second, the reasoning of the intellect on the subject proposed, with a view to grasp it thoroughly and at the same time to draw from it lessons of virtue, to be offered for the acceptance of the will.

Third, the striving of the will and the eliciting of various acts and affections of love, confidence, and gratitude toward God, of hatred and sorrow for sin, and of the desire of holiness.

Fourth, earnest prayer for those things which our meditation has taught us we stand in need of, addressed to one or other of the divine Persons, or to all, according to the matter in hand and our own devotion, in which prayer we urge the reasons why we should be heard, and these are chiefly three :

1. On the part of God, because He is good, because He loves us, because He wishes us to pray to Him, because He is glorified thereby; and so we appeal to Him by each and every of His divine perfections.

2. On the part of Christ, by reason of His merits as our Redeemer, each single mystery, action, and suffering of His life on earth urging with our heavenly Father the virtues which made His divine Son so pleasing to Him; with Christ Himself, the love He bears for us, His office of mediator, the great price He has paid for our souls; and with the Holy Spirit His love for Christ, on whom He is poured out so copiously.

3. On our own part, on account of our necessity and grievous misery; for, conceived as we are in iniquity, incited by concupiscence, assailed by fierce temptations, and the insidious allurements of the world, Satan wages war on us because we are made in God's likeness; and that is a strong argument why God should undertake our defence.

The more to move His divine mercy, we may remind Him of our special needs, and, if we are striving for perfection, may also sometimes, like Ezechias, allege the services we have rendered: "I beseech Thee, O Lord, remember how I have walked before Thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is pleasing before Thee" (4 *Kings* xx. 3).

"In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your petitions be made known to God" (*Philipp.* iv. 6). Our object, remember, is not so much to move God to mercy, for He urges and commands us to pray; but rather to awaken our own confidence and fervor, so that we may deserve to be heard. "Meditation begets knowledge, knowledge compunction, compunction devotion, and devotion is the perfection of prayer." (Aug., *De Spir. et Anima*, c. lxx.) By meditation a man comes to know God and himself; this fills him with shame and compunction for his own vileness; then the thought of God's mercy and goodness brings peace and sweetness, and so he pours

14 A TREATISE ON MENTAL PRAYER

out his heart, lays open his sad condition, and confidently implores help from the divine compassion.

THE COLLOQUY

It is therefore in the colloquy or converse with God that prayer chiefly consists, and this is of two kinds, the praise of God and the petition for grace.

I. OF THE PRAISE OF GOD St. Paul writes thus: "Be ye filled with the Holy Spirit, speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns, and spiritual canticles, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things, in the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ, to God and the Father" (*Eph.* v. 18-20).

In psalms—with a love for God like that of David and a fixed resolve never to fail in the least of His commandments, chanting His praise on a psaltery of ten strings, that is on all the affections of your heart.

In hymns—with a rapturous celebration of His divine perfections and His wonderful works, crying aloud, with the seraphim and cherubim: "Holy, holy, holy! Lord God of hosts!" (*Is.* vi. 3) recounting His goodness, His mercy, His wisdom, His omnipotence, especially in the redemption of man. And, seeing He is beyond all praise, summon to your aid every created thing, animate and inanimate, as the three children did

in the fiery furnace, and pour out your whole being with holy David: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and let all that is within me praise His holy name" (*Ps. cii. 1*).

In spiritual canticles—in joy and exultation for the divine goodness in itself and because it is glorified by the saints in heaven and on earth, there in full possession, here in hope. "And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of great thunders, saying: Alleluia: for the Lord our God the almighty hath reigned. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give glory to Him" (*Apoc. xix. 6, 7*).

Giving thanks always—for all His mercies to ourselves and others, both men and angels.

II. THE PETITION FOR GRACE. We may pray either as children to their father: "Our Father Who art in heaven"; or as mendicants: for He is "rich unto all that call upon Him" (*Rom. x. 12*); or as the sick to their physician; or as disciples to their master; or, if we have confidence enough, as a bride to her bridegroom. But in all this let the Holy Spirit be our guide, who "Himself asketh for us with unspeakable groanings" (*Rom. viii. 26*), always suggesting what is most to our profit. Hence St. Bernard calls devotion "the tongue of the soul wherewith we speak and converse with the eternal Word" (*Serm. xlv*). We

may also converse with our own hearts, rebuking, reproaching, and arousing ourselves: "Why art thou sad, O my soul, and why dost thou trouble me? Hope in God; for I will still give praise to Him, the salvation of my countenance and my God" (*Ps.* xli. 6, 7). Or again, we may converse with the saints, rejoicing in their happiness and begging for a share in it.

THE EXCELLENCE OF PRAYER

IN PRAYER not only does man speak with God, but God with man; and "the word of the Word is the imparting of a gift" (ST. BERNARD, *Serm.* xlv). "To every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the giving of Christ" (*Eph.* iv. 7). Hence follow "joy unspeakable" (1 *Pet.* i. 8) and that "peace of God which surpasseth all understanding" (*Philipp.* iv. 7). Therefore "I will hear what the Lord God will speak in me; for He will speak peace unto His people, and unto His saints, and unto them that are converted to the heart" (*Ps.* lxxxiv. 9).

Prayer has a close connection with every virtue, because, as Cassian points out: "Without them prayer can not be perfect, and they without prayer can be neither acquired nor preserved"; and this proves clearly the excellence and the necessity of prayer. It is the consummation of

all virtues, because in it the soul cleaves to God and is closely united with Him who is the source of every good action we perform. In prayer God repays us a hundredfold for whatever we have given up or endured for His sake. It is a pledge of eternal life.

THE SUBJECT OF MEDITATION

THIS embraces the whole of God's revelation to man; yet it may be divided according to the spiritual condition of those who pray. Some are sinners, yet wish to turn away from sin, or, having already done so, are still assailed by their passions and desire to master them. Such as these must tread what is called the *Purgative Way*. Others, having vanquished their passions, are striving for perfect virtue and a fuller grasp of heavenly things. These follow the *Illuminative Way*. Others, again, have already reached a close and familiar union with God. Theirs is the *Unitive Way*.

In the *Purgative Way* we deal with sin, studying its nature and its effects, and with our own sins, reckoning up their number and their guilt, that so we may be stricken with sorrow for what we have done and with horror at the thought of falling again. To this end we dwell on what excites fear, fear being "the beginning of wisdom,"

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on death, judgment, and hell; all this with a view to a good confession and our restoration to sanctifying grace. After that, for the further rooting out of sinful inclinations, we consider the life of Christ our Lord, especially His infancy, since our object is to become once more “as new-born babes” (1 *Pet.* ii. 2).

The *Illuminative Way* is that in which they tread who, having been purged from sin, are advancing from virtue to virtue. Their occupation is on the Public Life of Christ and His Passion; for it is by acting and suffering with Him that we make progress, His life and death being the school wherein we learn to do great deeds and endure great evils.

The *Unitive Way* leads on to the contemplation of the resurrection and triumph of our Saviour, of the Holy Trinity and the divine perfections. “The high hills are a refuge for the harts, the rock for the urchins” (*Ps.* ciii. 18). That is, the lofty heights of the Godhead are for the fleet of foot who are free from all earthly affections; the rock is for the less venturesome—“and the rock was Christ” (1 *Cor.* x. 4).

Hence the division of these meditations into six parts:

- THE PURGATIVE WAY: i. The great truths.
ii. The early years of Christ.

THE ILLUMINATIVE WAY: iii. His public life.
iv. His Passion.

THE UNITIVE WAY: v. His Resurrection and triumph. vi. The divine perfections.

These, like the six wings of the seraphim, raise us up to God, that so, being purged from sin, filled with light, and perfect in charity, we may be able to help others; for we ought not to rest content with our own personal advancement, but gladly lend a hand to our neighbor. The following meditations are therefore to be used according to our need, in such sort that each one may at times adopt them all, though not after the same manner; for while the perfect gather from them the fruit of union the beginner or the more advanced can also gain profit according to his necessity; and whereas the imperfect may sometimes rise to an act of union, so the perfect, being anxious over past sin, may still tread the Purgative Way. There is, moreover, a great diversity of disposition, some being less moved to detest their sins by fear of punishment than by the thought of God's goodness. As a rule, however, each should follow the road best suited to the condition of his soul and use such meditations as serve his need.

ON ENTERING INTO PRAYER

“BEFORE prayer prepare thy soul, and be not as a man that tempteth God” (*Ecclus.* xviii. 23). This implies the selection of some fixed subject and its division into points, for want of which the mind will wander about over various thoughts without much profit. At the same time we may—nay, we should—follow the attraction of the Holy Spirit if He draws us away from the subject prepared; but we should not abandon it from mere levity.

First, then, we realize with a living faith the presence of God. This can be done either by thinking of Him as a vast sea all around us and containing us, or as within us by His essence, His presence, His omnipotence. So Our Lord tells us: “When thou shalt pray, enter into thy chamber and, having shut the door, pray to thy Father in secret” (*Matt.* vi. 6). Retire into the secret chamber of your heart and shut the doors of your senses. If you find yourself deeply moved by the sense of God’s presence you may rest in it; commonly, however, it is recalled that we may realize throughout our prayer that the divine eyes are upon us: “The meditation of my heart shall be always in Thy sight” (*Psa.* xviii. 15); and this above all in our colloquies: “In His sight I pour

out my prayer, and before Him I declare my trouble" (*Ps. cxli. 3*).

In the next place we have to show a profound reverence both of body and soul, adoring His majesty, with three genuflections if this aids our devotion; for He deserves far greater respect than any earthly monarch. Then prostrate on the ground we pour forth our lowly homage, after the example of Christ our Lord, "who in the days of His flesh, with a strong cry and tears, offering up prayers and supplications to Him that was able to save Him from death, was heard for His reverence" (*Heb. v. 7*).

After this, kneeling down, we bless ourselves, saying: "Through the sign of the cross, O Lord our God, deliver us from our enemies." Some then say the Confiteor; others, with St. Basil, begin with an act of thanksgiving. In all this we may follow our own devotion, never omitting, however, the consecration of our prayer to God's glory and a petition for His blessing upon it.

OF THE OBSTACLES TO MEDITATION

MEDITATION, being a mental operation, is rendered difficult by the inconstancy and drifting of the imagination. Even the saints complain of this: "My thoughts are dissipated, tormenting my

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heart'' (*Job* xvii. 2). This arises from various causes. It may come from the devil, or from our own unstable fancy, or from unmortified affections, or from worldly cares, or from remissness and sloth, or from want of a serious effort to fix the attention.

To deal first with these last two, the subject of the meditation should be clearly set before the mind, with its causes, effects, and circumstances. Let us take as an instance the Incarnation. We first put distinctly before ourselves the great fact, as taught by faith. Then we consider the motive, namely the mercy of the good God, there being no merit on the part of man; next the end, to wit the manifestation of that mercy in the restoration of the human race; after that the result, our justification, resurrection, and glorification, not forgetting the appalling misery we thereby escape; lastly, the circumstances of time, place, and manner under which the Son of God took flesh.

We dwell on each of these considerations so long as we find it profitable. All will go well if the Holy Spirit carries us forward, filling out our sails with a favorable breeze; but when the wind drops we must be ready to take to the oars, exerting ourselves to the utmost with that ordinary grace which is never refused to men of good-will; and, though there may be less consolation for us then, there will be more merit by reason of our

greater earnestness and the difficulties we have to face. Christ will be at hand to aid us in the stress of trouble, and presently there will follow "a great calm."

The chief aids against distractions and dryness of soul are these four:

1. Humility, arising from consciousness of our weakness and confusion at the thought of being so distracted in God's very presence.

2. A firm resolve to admit no unseemly thoughts, and a steady effort to repel them, after the example of Abraham, who, having driven the birds away from his sacrifice, deserved in a vision to hear the secret things of God (*Gen. xv. 11*).

3. Earnest prayer for relief: "My heart hath forsaken me. Be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me. Look down, O Lord, to help me" (*Ps. xxxix. 13, 14*); "My soul is as earth without water unto Thee. Hear me speedily, O Lord; my spirit hath fainted away" (*Ps. cxlii. 6*).

4. Confidence in God, since it is He who has commanded us to pray; so we may cry out: "Depart from me, ye malignant, and I will search the commandments of my God" (*Ps. cxviii. 115*).

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OF EXTERNAL HELPS TO PRAYER

THOUGH meditation is an operation of the intellect, it is aided by the imagination, the tongue, and the senses.

The *imagination*, though a hindrance when it goes astray, may do good service by picturing a scene; so it should be brought into play at the outset. It will represent hell to us as a prison, dark, deep, loathsome, and belching flames, the stable at Bethlehem as open to the winds, lit with a lantern and littered with straw, on which our Saviour lies. Those who find this picture-painting difficult are not to waste time on it, lest they weary the brain, while those to whom it comes easily must beware both of mental strain and of the illusions of Satan, who may tempt them to take the phantasm for the thing itself and to imagine that what is a mere creation of the fancy is a heaven-sent vision.

The *tongue* may help with vocal prayer in times of dryness and distraction; for attention is aroused thereby and torpor thrown off. To this end we may give utterance to the feelings of our own hearts or make use of any familiar and suitable prayer.

As for the *senses*, some people find themselves more recollected when they close their eyes and so shut out all external objects; others are soothed by

the sight of the sky or a holy picture; others again are helped by striking the breast, bending the knee, prostrating on the ground, stretching out the arms in the form of a cross. Let each follow the plan that suits him best; but in public of course whatever is unusual should be avoided.

OF EXAMINATION AFTER MEDITATION

THIS is of great value.

1. We examine ourselves as to what went before our prayer. Did we prepare the subject properly, think of it just before going to sleep, recall it to mind on waking, place ourselves devoutly in God's presence and beg His blessing on what we were about to do? If not we stir ourselves to sorrow and resolve to be more exact in future.

2. We scrutinize the prayer itself. Was it distracted and dry, or fervent and devout? Was it all employed in brain-work, so that no room was left for that of the heart? Were any good desires conceived, any good resolutions formed? Were our colloquies fervent? If all went well we thank God for it; if not we try to find out the cause with a view to remove it.

3. We then discuss the lights received, the motions that swept over the soul, in order to discover whither they led and what effects they produced, proving the spirits "if they be of God."

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4. Lastly, we consider how we may put in practice what we have learned; for the tree that bears no fruit shall be cut down, whereas the just "shall be like a tree which is planted near the running waters, which shall bring forth its fruit in due season" (*Ps. i. 3*). Meditation should result in a general reformation of conduct, the correction of even slight faults, the shunning of dangerous occasions, the restraint of passions, the conquest of difficulties and temptations, the facing of labor and suffering, and the faithful performance of all the duties of our state; in one word, the imitation of Christ our Lord.

OF OTHER KINDS OF PRAYER

TO AID the weakness of human nature, which soon grows weary of spiritual things, various methods of prayer have been invented by holy men. St. Ignatius gives three of great excellence.

The *First Method* is on the ten commandments, the seven deadly sins, etc. It is most suitable for those in the Purgative Way and will be found fully treated on page 86.

The *Second Method* consists in dwelling on each word of some saying of Holy Writ, some psalm or hymn or prayer, as long as we find profit in it. It is specially suited for those in the Illuminative

Way, and is exemplified in the meditation on the Our Father, page 243.

The *Third Method* is somewhat similar, but with this difference, that, instead of meditating on each word of a prayer, we say it slowly and with great fervor, timing the words by our breathing and uttering one with each respiration. In the Unitive Way this is very profitable; yet all these three methods may be used with advantage at any time.

OF CONTEMPLATION

THERE are three ways of meditating. Some give more time to thought, less to affection, others more to affection, though not to the exclusion of thought; others, again, find their hearts stirred by the mere aspect of what is before them and so have no need to reason on it. This last is Contemplation.

As a rule, we can hardly expect to arrive at it till after a long time spent in ordinary meditation; but as a young girl who is sought in marriage makes many and careful inquiries as to the condition and character of her lover,¹ but, being once satisfied on these points, is filled with joy at the sound of his voice or even

¹ Would to God the modern girl would take a lesson from her old-fashioned Spanish sister!

the mere mention of his name, so he who has pondered deeply on the life of Christ and has thus come to know what and how lovable He is finds himself carried away at the mere thought of Him without any pause for reflection. Yet, as spiritual impressions fade so much more rapidly than sensible ones, those who give themselves to contemplation will do well to fall back from time to time upon the common method, so as to renew and strengthen the knowledge they have acquired and the light they have received of things divine. At the same time it is true that God often forestalls with His benedictions those who have had but little practice in meditation, filling their souls with sudden light and causing love to gush forth, as it were, unbidden. They, therefore, who have no capacity for meditation can follow this other method and, setting before their minds some fixed subject, implore the divine light, which will take the place of methodical study, and that all the more because they are helped by their reflections in the past; for they are not dealing with what is absolutely unfamiliar to them; and then God is sure to be with them, for He never abandons those that trust in Him.

OF EXTRAORDINARY KINDS OF PRAYER

“I WILL pour out upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of prayers” (*Zac.* xii. 10). Such is God’s promise to His Church. Yet not in one way only does the Holy Ghost teach us to pray; for He is, as the Wise Man tells us, one, yet manifold (*Wis.* vii. 22). There are, therefore, higher kinds of prayer of many varieties; but to these no man may venture to aspire, for this would only expose him to the danger of illusion, Satan often transforming himself “into an angel of light” (*2 Cor.* xi. 14). When, however, the invitation is offered by God we must accept it with submission and caution. A brief explanation must here suffice.

Understand, then, that as there are five external senses whereby we perceive sensible things, so there are five internal ones whereby we become conscious of things spiritual. Through these we arrive at a sort of experimental knowledge of the mysteries of God, which excels that gained by reasoning much as the taste of honey surpasses any description of it. This is the subject-matter of Mystical Theology, a science explained by Dionysius and other Fathers, and notably by St. Bonaventure in the sixth of his “Seven Roads to Eternal Life.” Yet, as St. Bernard writes, “there

is no understanding such matters till we have first had experience of them.”

Spiritual Sight sets a mystery before us in so clear a light that we seem to see it in itself, though of course this does not exclude faith. This clear vision brings with it exultant joy; but to partake of it the heart must be still and calm, free from all distraction of worldly cares: “Be still and see that I am God” (*Ps.* xlv. 11). With such rays of inward light God is wont to visit His servants; but they are coruscations, sudden flashes, vanishing as quickly as they come. Even sinners are sometimes favored with these illuminations, that, seeing the malice of sin or some other startling truth, they may be converted. (See Vol. II, page 175—“The Conversion of St. Paul.”)

Spiritual Hearing enables the soul, as it were, to hear God speaking, so that His will becomes plain to it. “My soul melted when my beloved spoke” (*Cant.* v. 6). Like these internal voices, though not uttered in the same way, are the internal inspirations granted alike to the just and the wicked. Both these forms of communication, sight, and hearing, are referred to by Job (xlii. 5), “With the hearing of the ear I have heard Thee, but now my eye seeth Thee”; for the sight of the soul, like that of the body, is more excellent than hearing, inasmuch as it is clearer and makes a deeper impression.

Spiritual Smell makes us realize the sweet fragrance of things divine, filling us thereby with comfort and strength. "We will run after Thee to the odor of Thine ointments" (*Cant.* i. 3). For, as a deerhound, having struck the scent, will not leave it, so the soul, having once inhaled this heavenly odor, is drawn to follow it, and so we often observe in those who are attracted to the religious life that nothing is strong enough to hold them back.

Spiritual Taste—"Sweeter than honey and the honeycomb" are the things of God, making all earthly pleasures stale and insipid. "My heart and my flesh have rejoiced in the living God" (*Ps.* lxxxiii. 2). This it is that makes Our Lord's yoke so sweet and the practice of virtues, otherwise difficult, so easy. "Oh, how great is the multitude of Thy sweetness, O Lord, which Thou hast hidden for them that fear Thee!" (*Ps.* xxx. 20). It is not given in its fulness to every one, though a large share of it may fall even to sinners, to wean them from sensual delights; but it is the special heritage of those who, for love of Christ, have stripped themselves of all earthly attachments.

Spiritual Touch embraces God. "I held Him and I will not let Him go" (*Cant.* iii. 4). Nay, more: "Let Him kiss me with the kiss of His mouth" (*Cant.* i. 1). "His left hand is under my

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head and His right hand shall embrace me'' (*Cant.* viii, 3).

These spiritual sensations God gives as it pleases Him. If we wish to enjoy them we must mortify our bodily senses; for St. Gregory says: "The closing of the outward sense opens the inward," and St. Augustine: "The inward sense is dormant so long as we give ourselves to outward delights."

THE TIME FOR MEDITATION

BESIDES one's daily prayer there are special occasions when it is well to lay aside all other cares in order to apply oneself to the serious consideration of the state of one's soul. Then for a week, or at any rate for a few days, we make what is called a Retreat, and this we may do for various reasons:

1. To turn from sin to God and prepare carefully for a general confession.

2. To gain a practical knowledge of mystical theology under a skilful director.

3. To obtain light in the choice of a state of life or in some other important matter.

4. To rouse ourselves to fervor if we find we are growing tepid.

5. Simply to enjoy quiet converse with God.

As to the time or length of daily meditation no

hard and fast rule can be laid down. An hour either in the morning or evening is desirable; for we may take Our Lord's words as said to ourselves: "Could you not watch with Me one hour?" If we can not spare an hour, then half an hour or a quarter, with something more on festivals; but whatever we have once fixed upon should be sternly adhered to, since repeated failures are sure to end in utter neglect. Not even for fear of death would Daniel omit his prayer thrice a day, and thus he deserved to be saved from the lions. Our other affairs will never suffer by the time given to prayer; nay they will profit by it.

It is a great help to have a habit of invoking God in ejaculatory prayers, especially such as recall the good desires formed in meditation. These are all the easier because they are short, and for that reason can be made with greater fervor; and they enable us to fulfil Our Lord's behest: "We ought always to pray and not to faint" (*Luke* xviii. 1). "The thought of man shall give praise to Thee and the remainders of the thought shall keep holiday to Thee" (*Psalms* lxxv. 11). For these short prayers are, so to speak, the fragments of our meditation—"Gather up the fragments that remain, lest they be lost" (*John* vi, 12) and St. John Chrysostom would have them repeated hourly at least, so as to form a sort of spiritual

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timepiece. It was in this way Cassian tells us that the hermits of the Thebaid used to consecrate their toil. If a wicked man were to blaspheme God at every other breath what guilt he would heap upon his soul! How much merit then there must be in constantly blessing Him!

AIDS TO PRAYER

BY FATHER BUSÉE, S.J.

1. A SUITABLE place, free from noise, with the light subdued, if possible.

2. A fixed time, which should not be changed without good reason; the early morning is the best. The meditation should last for an hour or at least half an hour.

3. A devout position. If you can not kneel throughout you may stand or sit a while. When deeply moved, you will find it helpful, after the example of Christ, to prostrate yourself on the ground; but always take that posture which best secures attention and devotion.

4. If in any one point you find what you want don't pass on to another; it is not essential that you should get through all three points within the hour. You may return to the subject next day and, after briefly repeating what specially struck you, you can then go on. Indeed, it is very good

to repeat a meditation, varying only the colloquy.

5. While the essence of meditation lies rather in the action of the heart than in that of the mind you must be careful not to put any strain upon yourself, but to pray in such a way that the head may not suffer, conversing sweetly with God, with Christ and Our Lady, etc., singing in your heart, with the blessed spirits: "Holy, holy, holy!"

6. But should God touch you so tenderly that you burst into tears, respond humbly and let your tears flow; but this must not go on too long, especially if you have wrought yourself up to it, or the head will give out. In certain cases, however, this rush of feeling should be most welcome, as when you are preparing for a general confession of your whole life or of the past year and are striving for that perfect contrition which, according to the theologians, washes away all guilt and in great measure discharges the debt of punishment due to it; or when you are assaulted by some violent temptation against faith or chastity or religious vocation; or when you find that you have grown quite cold in the pursuit of holiness; or when you have some great work in hand for God beset with many difficulties.

7. When you find yourself bereft of all joy and consolation you are not to lose heart. If you know that this comes through your neglect in preparing for meditation, humble yourself, ac-

knowledge your fault, and all will soon be well. If, however, it is no fault of yours, reflect that it is permitted by God either to teach you that consolation is not at man's command, but a heavenly gift, or to prove whether you give yourself to prayer for His pleasure or your own comfort. So in time of desolation you must say: I did not begin for my own sake, but for God's, and for His sake I will go on.

8. When tormented with distractions do not break off, but remember that there can be no fault so long as you do not give way to them. Resist them as often as they return, and your prayer, laborious as it is, will be more pleasing to God than if you were filled with devotion. You may at such times fall at once to the colloquy, acknowledging humbly that by your own strength you can do nothing, bitterly accusing yourself as a most worthless servant, forasmuch as you can not keep your thoughts fixed on God even for a short time; and this will very speedily bring Him to your aid.

9. Lastly, if you wish to make fruitful meditations, remember God's presence all through the day, make frequent use of ejaculatory prayer, read plenty of good books, hear Mass, and go to communion as often as possible. Keep good company, watch over your senses; above all, control your tongue, do works of charity and penance, and

try to carry out the good resolutions formed in time of meditation.

Of the Use to Be Made of the Following Meditations

1. THEIR primary object, of course, is to provide matter for daily prayer, to help us to collect our thoughts and give us suitable divisions. The colloquies are merely suggestive; the heart must speak for itself.

2. They may also serve for spiritual reading, God enlightening the mind as we read; but to secure this they must be read thoughtfully and prayerfully.

3. They may serve, moreover, to lighten the labor of directors who have to form others to the habit of prayer; for they furnish exercises suited to each one's capacity, and thoughts that will stimulate him to aim at the perfection of his state.



PART I

THE PURGATIVE WAY

INTRODUCTION

MEDITATION, says St. Bernard, helps to purify the heart; for, according to St. Peter (*Acts* xv. 9), the heart is purified by faith, and faith is nourished by a thoughtful consideration of the mysteries of Revelation, above all of those great fundamental truths which meet us in the Purgative Way. Hence arise three kinds of acts on our part:

1. Self-knowledge, begetting self-contempt or humility, and this of two sorts: the humility of those who have never fallen into mortal sin, yet humble themselves, as they ought to do, at the thought of their own nothingness both as to nature and grace; and the humility of those who, having lost their innocence, are abashed at the sight of their own uncleanness. (Part I is specially suited to their case.)

2. Those acts by which we prepare ourselves for justification, such as fear of God's justice, hope in His mercy, sorrow for sin, confession, and satisfaction.

3. Those acts whereby we mortify our inordi-

nate inclinations and check the habits contracted in an evil life. For we are forced to admit the justice of what St. Paul says: "As you have yielded your members to serve uncleanness and iniquity unto iniquity, so now yield your members to serve justice, unto sanctification" (*Rom. vi. 19*). And again: "As we have borne the image of the earthly, let us bear also the image of the heavenly" (*1 Cor. xv. 49*). Indeed if we are in thorough earnest we shall go further and follow the advice of God's prophet: "As it was your mind to go astray from God, so when you return again you shall seek Him ten times as much" (*Baruch iv. 28*).

Even the holiest who are far advanced in the spiritual life should sometimes tread this path; for the Wise Man warns us all: "Be not without fear about sin forgiven" (*Ecclus. v. 5*). "Be not afraid to be justified even to death" (*Ecclus. xviii. 22*). And the angel of the Apocalypse: "He that is just, let him be justified still: and he that is holy, let him be sanctified still" (*Apoc. xxii. 11*).

FUNDAMENTAL MEDITATIONS

"MAN," says St. Ignatius, "has been created to praise God our Lord, to show Him reverence, and to serve Him, and by so doing to save his own soul; and everything else on the face of the earth

has been created for the sake of man and to help him to attain the end for which he was created. Hence it follows that he must make use of these things inasmuch as they help toward that end, and if ever they stand in his way must shake himself free from them. Wherefore it is necessary to make ourselves indifferent toward all created things in so far as it is left to the liberty of our free will to do so and is not forbidden; in such sort that we do not for our part wish for health rather than for sickness, for wealth rather than for poverty, for honor rather than for dishonor, for a long life rather than for a short one; and so in all other things, desiring and choosing only those which will best lead us to the end for which we were created." ("The Spiritual Exercises.")

MEDITATION I

THE END OF MAN

*Preparatory Prayer.*¹—Grant us, O God our Lord, Thy grace, that all our intentions, actions, and operations may be ordained purely to the service and praise of Thy divine majesty, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

¹ This prayer should precede every Meditation. It comes from the "Spiritual Exercises" of St. Ignatius. According to the traditional interpretation the actions are those of the body, the operations those of the soul.

Mental Picture.—Think of God as an immense ocean from which all being comes and into which it all returns.

Petition.—Light to know and understand the end of your being and strength to direct thereunto all the actions of your life. “Send forth Thy light and Thy truth” (*Ps. xlii. 3*).

FIRST POINT.—Man was created to praise, reverence, and serve God. Created.—What does this mean? It means that a few years ago I had no existence, no one on earth had ever thought of me, and God has given me all I have and all I am. To Him I owe everything; of myself I am nothing, have nothing, can do nothing, am worth nothing. I am more absolutely dependent on my God than a new-born child on its mother.

Why did God create me? Because He is good. He had no need of me; He has gained nothing by me, but He wanted me to be happy and to rejoice in Him. He has been thinking of me and planning my happiness through all eternity and through all time working it out.

SECOND POINT.—To praise God our Lord, etc.—Why should I praise Him? Because He is *God* and deserves infinite praise; because He is *Lord* and can command it; because He is *my* God, *my* Lord, *my* Father, so good and kind to me. How am I to praise Him? In thought, word, and work. Why should I reverence Him? For the same

reasons. How? By never offending Him and by walking ever in His sight. Why should I serve Him? For the same reasons. How? By doing His holy will.

THIRD POINT.—And by so doing to save his own soul. How loving of God thus to connect my happiness with His service! Is He not indeed *my* God? Salvation means the bliss of heaven, union with God Himself. Justice might have demanded that He should give me natural happiness in return for my praise and service. Having made me immortal, He might have allotted me an earthly paradise where I should bask forever in the sunshine of His love; but that was not enough for Him. He loves me so much that He must have me with Him in heaven; so by His grace He lifts me up to a supernatural life, that I may be able to attain that supreme felicity.

Colloquy with God, my Creator. Acts of faith and joy. Our Father.

MEDITATION II

SALVATION

Preparatory Prayer, Mental Picture, and Petition as before.

FIRST POINT.—And by so doing to save his own soul. I must either save or lose my soul. To lose it means eternal misery; to save it eternal joy; for

this soul of mine is a spirit and can never cease to be. This earthly life is given me to work out my salvation; a good part of it is gone already; how much is left? God knows. Like a boy sitting for an examination, I keep eying the clock. How quickly the hands move on! So much to be done, so little time to do it in. Yet on what I do now my success or failure for eternity depends. I shall never see these papers again when once I have handed them in; and, unlike the boy, I do not know when they will be called for. Therefore I must be up and doing. "Now is the hour for us to rise from sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we (first) believed" (*Rom. xiii. 11*).

SECOND POINT.—To lose my soul!—What a maddening thought! After all I have already done for it, after all the sacrifices I have made, after all it has cost Jesus Christ! I can not bear the thought; it would drive me crazy. I weigh this soul of mine in the devil's balance—he ought to know its value, for he has lost heaven himself; and I find he is ready to give the whole world for it: "All these will I give thee if falling down thou wilt adore me" (*Matt. iv. 9*). I weigh it in God's balance, and I find that He thought it worth all the blood of His only Son: "For God so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son" (*John iii. 16*). And shall I gamble this precious soul away, play pitch and toss for it, as though it were a thing of no worth?

My soul again is my very self; this body is but its earthly lodging. Shall I spend all I have on my house and leave myself to starve?

THIRD POINT.—My soul, one soul, one chance of saving it—never another!—This, then, is the great business of my life, the only thing that matters. It is *necessary*, the *one* thing necessary, *personal*, *urgent*; that is, it must be done, it alone, by me, *now*; I can not put it off for an hour. Other men may do something to help me; but the responsibility rests with myself: it must be my own work. Yet, oh, how wonderful! The great God makes it His affair: “Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?” God was under no necessity to create me; but, having created me, He can not rest till He has saved me. It would seem to be His only affair; for has He not called me “the apple of His eye”? It is of such personal interest to Him that each Person of the Blessed Trinity must take part in it. It is urgent, too. From my first coming into the world, from the beginning of the world itself, my God has been hard at work to secure my salvation. Surely, then, I must help Him with a will. If I were shipwrecked what a desperate fight I should make for life! If I were told to run for my life, my God! how I should run!

Colloquy with God, my salvation. Acts of faith and hope. Our Father.

MEDITATION III

THE END OF CREATURES

Preparatory Prayer and Mental Picture, as before.

Petition.—Grace to use the creatures of God for His glory and my salvation.

FIRST POINT.—I will consider God's munificence in surrounding me with so many creatures of all sorts to supply my necessities and to fill me with delight. They were all made for me; they are my loving Father's gifts to His child. He has given them to me, as we give toys to children, to please me, to occupy me, to instruct me, to show His love for me, and to make me love Him in return. "All ye works of the Lord, bless the Lord; praise and exalt Him above all for ever" (*Dan.* iii. 57). With the Three Children in the fiery furnace let us call upon all creatures, the heavens, the waters, the sun, moon, and stars, mountains, hills, plants and animals, the sons of men, the spirits of the just, the blessed angels, to help us in thanking our God for all He has done for us. In truth a glorious symphony of praise swells up before God's throne from every creature He has made; yet it is a song without words till man comes on the scene to lend it articulate utterance. He is the leader of the choir; but, alas! he is either silent or, if he sings,

is out of tune. It is bad enough when one single instrument plays false; but when the leading voice goes wrong the music is ruined.

SECOND POINT.—Is it possible that while all things around me yield me such faithful service I use them only to offend my good God? I ought to regard them as means given me by Him for securing the end of my being; but how often I use them as if, instead of means, they were an end in themselves, and try to find my rest in them rather than in God! What a preposterous inversion is this! And since I make so bad a use of His gifts why does He not in wrath take them away from me? Yet no; in His infinite patience “He maketh His sun to rise upon the good and bad, and raineth upon the just and the unjust” (*Matt.* v. 45). Let me deplore my folly, my base ingratitude, and resolve in future to use God’s creatures only for His glory and my own salvation.

THIRD POINT.—This visible creation is like a picture-book, telling us of God’s wisdom and power and goodness, that we may know and love Him. “For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made; His eternal power also and divinity; so that they are inexcusable, because that, when they knew God, they have not glorified Him as God, or given thanks” (*Rom.* i. 20). “For the first author of beauty made all those things . . .

and He that made them is mightier than they; for by the greatness of the beauty, and of the creature, the Creator of them may be seen, so as to be known thereby" (*Wis.* xiii. 3-5).

Colloquy.—Pray for true wisdom, so that you may see God in every creature and constantly remember His presence in the world around you.

Colloquy with God, Creator of all things. Te Deum, page 399.

MEDITATION IV

INDIFFERENCE

Preparatory Prayer and Mental Picture, as before.

Petition.—Grace to regard all things simply as stepping-stones to God.

FIRST POINT.—If all creatures are meant to be stepping-stones to heaven it follows that we must use them in no other way; and as, in consequence of the Fall and the concupiscence begotten of it, they do not always help us but often stand in our way, we must learn to use them just in so much as they are serviceable and whenever they are not so to discard them, just as a man who is swimming for his life kicks off his boots, if he can; for though boots may be very useful on land they are a mere encumbrance when you fall into the water. In

order, however, to decide in each case what course to follow it is very clear that we must be indifferent, indifferent, that is, as the carpenter to his tools. You may see the fellow rummaging in his toolbox, throwing aside one tool after another; they are not what he wants. At last he gets hold of the one that will serve his purpose. His sole object is to do his job well; the tools are merely means to that end. But as we are naturally far from being indifferent we have to make ourselves so. A better example, therefore, is the cricketer. No cricketer is indifferent to his place in the field nor to his order in going in. One man likes a long field, another a short one, and all are glad to have the chance of running up a big score; yet, for the sake of the club, the county, or the nation he is playing for, each man sinks his own preferences and goes where he is sent or goes last to the wicket without any sign of annoyance. This is what we must aim at. Indifference is not a matter of feeling—we can not help our likes and dislikes—but an act of the will whereby we withhold our decision till we see what is best for God's glory and our own salvation.

A judge is bound to be free from bias, and it is as a judge I have to act. My God, give me grace to be an upright judge and never to favor one side more than the other.

SECOND POINT.—I must, therefore, not wish for

riches rather than for poverty, for honor rather than for dishonor, for health rather than for sickness, for a long life rather than for a short one. Who in the world can feel naturally indifferent to such things? Yet in these and all other matters I will try to hold myself in equilibrium and unattached, ever ready to prefer that which is best for God's glory and the interests of my own soul, "desiring and choosing only those things which best help me to the end for which I was created." I must keep that end always in view, as the helmsman keeps his eye fixed on the point to which he is steering.

THIRD POINT.—All this is far out of the reach of unaided human nature. We see how logical it is; we see what is the only wise and prudent course; yet, sensible as it is, we can not carry it out in practice by our own unaided strength. The conviction that indifference is necessary is a great step in the right direction; but we need a mighty grace if we are to square our conduct by that conviction. So let us with all our hearts beseech the good God that as He has enlightened our understandings so He will move our wills and give us the strength we need.

Colloquy with the Holy Ghost. Veni, Sancte Spiritus, page 400.

Sin as Seen in Others

MEDITATION V

THE SIN OF THE ANGELS

Preparatory Prayer as before.

Mental Picture.—The soul shut up in the body as in a convict prison, and both soul and body cast out among the brute beasts.

Petition.—Shame and confusion, seeing that so many have been lost for fewer sins than mine.

FIRST POINT.—The creation and trial of the angels.—Ages ago the angels were created in splendor and beauty inconceivable to us. “Thou wast the seal of resemblance,” that is “the image of Thy Maker,” “full of wisdom and perfect in beauty” (*Ezech.* xxviii. 12). So wonderful are these blessed spirits that St. John, though he had seen his Lord’s glory on Mount Thabor, more than once mistook them for Christ (*Apoc.* xix. 10; xxii. 8).

They were placed in an angelic paradise, there to prove their fidelity and so deserve to see God face to face. What their trial was is not certain; but it is commonly believed they were given to understand that hereafter God would take a nature far lower than their own, and they were called upon

to adore Him as the Babe of Bethlehem. Most of them did this gladly, Gabriel perhaps with so great zeal and devotion as to earn for himself the office of the Angel of the Incarnation.

SECOND POINT.—The revolt of Lucifer.—But the leader of their host refused. Lucifer was his name, the Bringer of Light, the Morning Star—a name that shows us what he was—yet unlike those of his fellow archangels, for they all bore the name of God Himself: Michael, Who is like to God; Gabriel, The Strength of God; Raphael, The Healing of God. Lucifer alone was not suffered to bear this holy name; for God foresaw that he would fall away. One-third of the angelic host followed him in his revolt, and then there was war in heaven, the good angels under Michael—that was his battle-cry, “Who is like to God?”—fighting against Lucifer and his wicked angels; and when these had been cast out of heaven the faithful spirits entered forever into the presence of their God. I will rejoice with them, with my own Guardian Angel above all, that they fought on God’s side that day.

But oh, the pity of it! Such myriads of bright spirits transformed into hideous demons! God’s first glorious creation brought to such sad ruin! And more than that—if they had not fallen there would have been none to tempt our first parents! What an appalling crop of evil has sprung from

this one sin! How was it conceived? We can not tell. All we know is that the angels had free will and were therefore able to make a bad choice. Pitiful indeed is the instability of the created will!

THIRD POINT.—Retribution.—“And thy heart was lifted up with thy beauty. Thou hast lost thy wisdom in thy beauty; and I have cast thee to the ground. All that see thee shall be astonished at thee. Thou art brought to nothing, and thou shalt never be any more” (*Ezech. xxviii. 17*). “I saw Satan like lightning falling from heaven.” (*Luke x. 18*). No room for repentance; instant and everlasting rejection.

And I have dared to defy Thee, great God, not once only, but over and over again, sinning not merely in thought, but in word and deed; not in one way alone, but in many, and, worst of all, in base ingratitude for Thy long-suffering mercy, of which the angels knew nothing. I will cast myself down in Thy sight and implore Thy pardon.

Colloquy with Christ crucified. There He hangs for love of me. What have I done for Him? What am I doing? What do I mean to do? *Miserere*, page 383.

MEDITATION VI

THE SIN OF OUR FIRST PARENTS

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

Mental Picture.—Adam and Eve being driven out of paradise.

Petition.—Shame and confusion.

FIRST POINT.—Their creation and trial.—Adam and Eve were created and placed in an earthly paradise. They were perfectly innocent and therefore perfectly happy, and God came down every day “in the afternoon air” to walk in that garden of Eden, giving them a foretaste of heavenly joy. But they, too, were on trial. Everything in paradise was their own with one exception. The fruit of one tree they were not to touch, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. What a little thing was this for God to ask of them! One would think the thought of disobeying could never come into their minds, and it never would have come if it had not been suggested from without. The simple story of Genesis has a deep meaning hidden under it and is full of instruction for us. Eve, we feel sure, could never have been so foolish as to forfeit all her happiness for the sake of one fruit, however delicious. Let us see if we can find out what led her astray.

SECOND POINT.—Their revolt.—Satan, filled

with jealousy and hatred, is resolved to ruin this new creation of God; so, finding his way into Eden, he watches long and closely the happy pair. Having marked the great love there is between them, he devises his plan of attack, and a diabolically clever plan it is. He will tempt Eve first and then Adam through his love for Eve. So he takes the form of a serpent—perhaps the only form God would allow him to take, though there was nothing loathsome in it then—and, winding his way among the flowers at her feet, attracts her attention.

Then Satan suggests to her the thought: “Why hath God commanded you, that you should not eat of every tree of paradise? And the woman answered him saying: Of the fruit of the trees that are in paradise, we do eat; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of paradise, God hath commanded us that we should not eat: and that we should not touch it, lest perhaps we die. And the serpent said to the woman: No, you shall not die the death; for God doth know that in what day soever you shall eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened: and you shall become as gods, knowing good and evil” (*Gen.* iii. 1).

These promptings arouse in Eve a fatal curiosity. She knows that evil must be something very terrible, since the good God has warned them so solemnly against it; but she has no practical ac-

quaintance with it and now, just as we do, conceives the wish to find out for herself what it really is like. "Why," she asks, "has God kept this secret from us?" And along with this comes the proud thought of being independent and like to God. At last, with full deliberation, she resolves to disobey God's command; she plucks the fruit and eats it. The fatal secret is hers. She has sinned; she is naked—that she never knew till now; she dreads Adam's anger and hides from him.

Now Adam is wandering through Eden looking for his beloved Eve, and at length she is obliged to come forth. He sees at once what has happened; the defilement of sin is upon her, and he turns away in horror. Then Adam's temptation begins, the most terrific ever man underwent; for think what they were to each other!

Eve pleads through her tears that he will not leave her alone to face God's wrath. For a long while he resists her entreaties, but does not go away, and so of course gives in at last and himself tastes of the forbidden fruit. St. Thomas says that this, too, was a sin of pride. Eve, he saw, had not been struck dead; and when she repeated to him the suggestion of the Evil One it awoke in him the same unholy ambition, the same insane desire of independence; yet the love of Eve and the fear of losing her was the lure that led him on. It was, indeed, a fearful temptation,

yet a most deliberate sin; a distinct preference of God's creature to God! *We* can see what he ought to have done. He should have left Eve and cast himself down before God to implore her pardon. Then God might have cast her off and given him a new companion, or, what is far more like His infinite mercy, have punished her for a time and then, for his sake, have taken her back into favor; for she was not the head of the human race. But passion, as with us, prevented his thinking of this, and he knew not what we know of the divine mercy.

THIRD POINT.—Retribution.—1. They are cast out of Eden. 2. They lose the grace of adoption. 3. They are stripped of original justice, so that their animal nature is henceforth in open revolt against reason. 4. They become subject to death, to pain, and sorrow of every kind. 5. The whole human race inherits their guilt and its penalties. Henceforth we must eat bread in the sweat of our brows; we are children of wrath, consigned to eternal damnation, and that original sin in which we are conceived becomes the seed of countless other sins whereby our guilt is deepened and the punishment due to us increased.

For nine hundred years did Adam do penance, and God "brought him out of his sin" (*Wis. x. 2*). Wherefore I, too, will do penance, accepting in patience and thankfulness whatever sufferings God

may send me, and even begging Him to strike, to burn, to cut me in this life, if so I may be spared hereafter.

Colloquy as in last Meditation. *Miserere*, page 382.

MEDITATION VII

DAMNATION FOR ONE SIN

Preparatory Prayer, Mental Picture, and Petition as in Meditation V.

FIRST POINT.—A mortal sin is a grave violation of God's law committed with full deliberation and full consent. One such sin deserves eternal reprobation; so it is possible that there is a soul now in hell for one single mortal sin—and I have committed so many! Oh, how great has been Thy mercy, my God! for it is Thy mercy alone that has saved me from the terrible fate I have so justly incurred.

SECOND POINT.—To be preserved from hell after having merited it is the same as to be rescued from it after falling into it. I may, therefore, say truly with David: "Thy mercy is great toward me, and Thou hast delivered my soul out of the lower hell" (*Ps. lxxxv. 13*). Now, suppose I had been dragged out of that bottomless pit and had time given me to repent and atone for my sins,

should I not feel grateful to God? Should I not gladly do penance for the rest of my life? Is it not clear then that I ought to do so now?

THIRD POINT.—Christ our Lord suffered and died for all the sins of the whole human race; yet He would have faced His bitter passion for one single sin. Call to mind all He endured; how, to atone for gluttony, He tasted gall and vinegar, wore a crown of thorns to atone for pride, was scourged to atone for sins of the flesh. At the same time remember those words of His: “If in the green wood they do these things, what shall be done in the dry?” (*Luke* xxiii. 31). If the Son of God went through such tortures for sins which were not His own what may the sinner himself expect?

Colloquy as in Meditation V. *Miserere*, page 383.

Sin in Ourselves

MEDITATION VIII

A PROCESSION OF SINS

Preparatory Prayer and Mental Picture, as in Meditation V.

Petition.—An ever-increasing sorrow and tears of contrition for the sins of the past.

FIRST POINT.—I recall my whole life, year by year, thinking of the places I have lived in, the friendships I have formed, the occupations in which I have engaged, and I find my sins “are multiplied above the hairs of my head” (*Ps.* xxxix. 13). O God, “I will recount to Thee all my years in the bitterness of my soul” (*Ps.* xxxviii. 15). There are many, many things I have forgotten; but Thou, my God, knowest them all. “From my secret sins cleanse me, O Lord, and from those of others spare Thy servant” (*Ps.* xviii. 13). How patient thou hast been with me! How often hast Thou forgiven me! Give me Thy grace now to be truly sorry.

SECOND POINT.—Every one of these sins is like a millstone about my neck, dragging me down to hell; what, then, must be the weight of so many? Like wild beasts they surround me on every side; how shall I escape them? “They have opened their mouths against me, as a lion ravening and roaring” (*Ps.* xxi. 14). I am like that servant who owed his lord ten thousand talents, and can never pay my debt. Moreover I have fallen again and again into the same sins: “The dog is returned to his vomit, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire” (2 *Pet.* ii. 22). Yet “have patience with me,” O Lord, and by the help of Thy grace “I will pay Thee all.”

THIRD POINT.—Man, made after the image of

God, is by sin made like to the beasts. His soul becomes the slave of his body, and both are enslaved to Satan; "for by whom a man is overcome, of the same also is he the slave" (2 *Pet.* ii, 19); and "whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin" (*John* viii, 34).

Colloquy.—I will bless the good God for His mercy in bearing with me so long and firmly resolve to keep myself clean from sin in future. *Miserere*, page 383.

MEDITATION IX

WHO IS THIS THAT SINS?

Preparatory Prayer, Mental Picture, and Petition as in Meditation VIII.

FIRST POINT.—Who is the sinner? Why, the dust of the earth, the grass of the field, a puff of smoke passing away, a fleeting shadow; such indeed is the human body. "Man, born of a woman, living for a short time, is filled with many miseries; who cometh forth like a flower, and is destroyed, and fleeth as a shadow, and never continueth in the same state" (*Job* xiv, 2). Yet, being so vile a thing, he dares to offend One who has the power to save him and the power to cast him into hell!

SECOND POINT.—Man's soul has been brought out of nothingness. "My substance is as nothing

before Thee" (*Ps.* xxxviii. 6). It has been conceived in iniquity and, while tossed about within by furious passions, is incessantly assailed without by invisible foes; so that it would seem better it had never been created. "There is no sin," says St. Augustine, "a man has ever committed which another man might not commit" (*Sol. c. v*). Therefore my soul is like an ulcer, an open sore running with corruption, unless healed by grace; yet it fears not to insult the only physician who can give it health!

THIRD POINT.—What am I compared to the immense multitude of men on the face of this earth? What are they to the angels in heaven? What are the angels compared to Him who made them? What, then, am I before my God? A rushlight in the full blaze of the mid-day sun. Yet I have dared to offend this mighty God! Let me do penance then in dust and ashes.

Colloquy as in Meditation VIII. De Profundis, page 382.

MEDITATION X

WHO IS OFFENDED BY SIN?

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

Mental Picture.—God's throne in heaven, before which the angels sing, "Holy, Holy, Holy," and

the four and twenty ancients cast their crowns, saying: "Thou art worthy, O Lord our God, to receive glory and honor and power, because Thou hast created all things and for Thy will they were and have been created" (*Apoc.* iv. 11).

Petition.—A deep sense of the majesty, holiness, and goodness of God.

FIRST POINT.—God is infinite majesty and power. As He created all things so does He preserve them in being, giving life to all that lives. Whatever I do then, be it good or evil, I do it in virtue of that life and intelligence and free-will which He has given me. And I have turned all these gifts against their Giver! I have broken His law over and over again, and for what? For a moment's gratification, a voluptuous glance, a vindictive word, a paltry ambition! "Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and ye gates thereof be very desolate, saith the Lord; for My people have done two evils. They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living water, and have digged to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water" (*Jer.* ii. 13).

SECOND POINT.—God is infinite wisdom and holiness. Every secret of my heart is known to Him. He is all around me; He is within me; "In Him we live and move and are" (*Acts* xvii. 28) and, notwithstanding all this, I have dared to offend Him! With the publican then, I will not so much as lift

up my eyes toward heaven, but strike my breast, saying: "O God, be merciful to me, a sinner."

THIRD POINT.—God is infinite goodness, and therefore worthy of infinite love. The blessed in heaven who see Him face to face can not help loving Him. They cleave to Him with their whole being; and, though I do not know Him as they do, His goodness and mercy to me are surely enough to set my heart on fire. He is my creator, my redeemer, my comforter; I know I ought to love Him with all my heart and soul. Alas! how far have I been from this love! How cheap I have held Thee, my good God!

Colloquy.—As I look around me I am filled with wonder to see all Thy creatures so submissive to me, so serviceable, so kind. The sun shines, the rain falls, the earth brings forth its fruits. I am treated by them all as if I were the best of Thy children. The saints in heaven plead for me; the angels watch over me day and night. Great, indeed, has been my ingratitude, but Thy goodness is greater. I will begin from this hour to cleave to Thee with all my strength and to do penance for my past unkindness. *De Profundis*, page 382.

Of the Last Things

MEDITATION XI

DEATH—I

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

Mental Picture.—I am standing by my own corpse laid out for burial, or sitting on my grave the night after the funeral.

Petition.—Grace to learn and remember the solemn lessons Death teaches.

FIRST POINT.—My whole life ought to be a preparation for death. I know that it must come; when, where, or how I know not. Like nicked trees in the forest, we are all waiting our turn to be cut down. Possibly I may live to a good old age; but what is a good old age? Eighty or ninety years at most; and what will ninety years appear when the end comes at last and eternity lies before me! How like a dream, how brief, how fleeting! “All those things are passed away like a shadow, and like a post that runneth on, and as a ship, that passeth through the waves, whereof, when it is gone by, the trace cannot be found, nor the path of its keel in the waters” (*Wis.* v. 9). Our Saviour warns us to be ready, like servants waiting for their master, with loins girt and lamps burning in our hands; for He will come as a thief

in the night. "Watch ye, therefore, because you know not the day nor the hour" (*Matt.* xxv. 13).

SECOND POINT.—Death is a great teacher. It teaches the end of man. Do I not feel now, as I sit by my own grave, that I was created for nothing else but to serve God and save my soul? If I have not done that, to what purpose have I lived? It teaches the vanity of this world, the hollowness of all its pleasures. It teaches the value of time, the value of grace, the value of self-restraint. It teaches, lastly, its own value, the value of a good death; for surely now that life is over a good death seems the one thing worth having at the cost of every possible sacrifice.

THIRD POINT.—Ought a good man to be afraid of death? The answer to this question is both "yes" and "no." David, it is very clear, was not afraid of Goliath; for he said to King Saul: "Let not any man's heart be dismayed in him. I, thy servant, will go and will fight against the Philistine." Yet, though so stout of heart, mark how carefully "he chose him five smooth stones out of the brook and put them in his shepherd's scrip which he had with him and took his sling in his hand and went forth against the Philistine" (*1 Kings* xvii. 32). A man who goes tiger-hunting is evidently not afraid of the tiger or he would stop at home; yet watch him making his preparations. How closely he looks to the priming of his

rifle, takes care to have at least one other in reserve, and counts his cartridges as though they were gold pieces. After all, then, he is afraid. Yes, he is afraid now that he may have no reason to be afraid then. It should be the same with us. If we always live in a holy fear of death, then, when it comes, we shall have no need to fear, because we shall be ready. And then remember that it is not you who go out hunting, but death that is hunting you, tracking you down like a wild beast on the trail. Every moment it is creeping nearer; when will it spring? "Watch ye therefore . . . lest coming on a sudden he find you sleeping. And what I say to you I say to all: Watch" (*Mark* xiii. 35-37).

"Nothing in the world is simpler than death to a soul that loves Our Lord. It is like turning the leaf of a book; the first page is time, the second eternity. . . . What are we doing in life? Working for the glory of God; and at the moment marked out by Him we die also for His glory. It is but a matter of detail. No trouble therefore over the past; for it is Jesus, our friend, who is to sit in judgment on it; and after having given us so many graces it will be a joy to Him to pour forth still greater graces on us, in such sort that the last may be the best."—FR. PAUL GINHAC, Appendix to His Life.

Colloquy with Our Lord on the cross. He has

overcome death, and if I cleave to Him I shall overcome, too. *Anima Christi*, page 376.

MEDITATION XII

DEATH—II

Preparatory Prayer, Mental Picture, and Petition, as in last Meditation.

FIRST POINT.—To the wicked or worldly man, whichever way he looks, death seems most bitter. He thinks of the past, and all his sins rise up before him, filling his soul with terror. “The sorrows of death surrounded me, and the torrents of iniquity troubled me” (*Ps.* xvii. 5). Then he remembers how he has squandered his life away on vanities, neglecting the sacraments and every other means of gaining grace and laying up merit. “O ye sons of men, how long will you be dull of heart? Why do you love vanity, and seek after lying? (*Ps.* iv. 3.) Such warnings he would not hear, and now perhaps it is too late.

SECOND POINT.—He thinks of the present, and finds himself on the point of being rudely wrenched away from everything he has set his heart on. His worldly goods are slipping from his grasp: “O Death, how bitter is the remembrance of thee to a man that hath peace in his possessions!” (*Ecclus.* xli. 1.) His dearest friends are being

torn away from him; his body, too, which he has loved so much and, with it, the whole world of sensible things wherein he has set all his delight. “Thou fool! This night do they require thy soul of thee; and whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?” (*Luke xii. 20.*)

THIRD POINT.—He thinks of the future, and that also is full of dread. He is passing out of this flesh into the realm of spirits—a frightening thought even for a just man—and what has he done to prepare himself for this great change? And he is going straightway to appear before his judge: “Give an account of thy stewardship; for now thou canst be steward no longer” (*Luke xvi. 2*). Oh, let me take heed before it is too late, lest I die the death of the wicked and find myself cast off by Him who died for me: “Amen, I say to you, I know you not” (*Matt. xxv. 12*).

Colloquy with Our Lord on the cross. Anima Christi, page 376.

MEDITATION XIII

“REMEMBER, MAN, THAT THOU ART DUST,” ETC.

Preparatory Prayer, Mental Picture, and Petition as in Meditation XI.

FIRST POINT.—“Remember.”—Alas! how prone we are to forget! This truth is being constantly

forced upon us and yet we lose sight of it. Our friends and acquaintances fall away from us and we forget that we must follow them. "To-day for me," they say, "and to-morrow for you;" yet we live as though we could count on many to-morrows. "With desolation is all the land made desolate, because there is none that considereth in the heart" (*Jer.* xii. 11). "Remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin" (*Ecclus.* vii. 40). We sin because we do not remember. God grant we may not die in our sins; for then we shall remember for all eternity, but remember in vain.

"Remember, *man.*" Thou who art so proud of thy manhood, so jealous of thy dignity, so impatient of the slightest insult or neglect, so haughty and self-reliant, so wedded to thine own opinion, so fond of having thine own way, remember "that thou art dust." Men boast of their ancestry; yet the proudest of them must trace it back to this poor beginning, a handful of dust. "Why is earth and ashes proud?" (*Ecclus.* x. 9.)

SECOND POINT.—"And unto dust thou shalt return."—We think, we speak, we reason; yet all the time we are but animated dust. The seed of corruption is within us, the argument of mortality, showing us whence we come and what we are and whither we go, back to the earth which brought us forth, to mingle with the common soil. It is a universal law which knows no exception. A little de-

lay there may be, a short respite; but the hour will strike at last and, however unwilling, we must obey the summons and say to the worms: “My mother and my sister” (*Job* xvii 14).

Three most blessed results should follow from this decree:

1. That, as the consciousness that he was made from the dust is not enough to keep man in subjection, he may at least be sobered and humbled by the thought of returning to it.

2. A great horror of sin; for it is sin which has brought this on us. Man in the beginning was exempt from death; but “because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife cursed is the earth in thy work. . . . In the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat bread, till thou return to the earth out of which thou wast taken; for dust thou art and into dust thou shalt return” (*Gen.* iii. 17, 19).

3. That this solemn thought may induce him to do penance for his sins: “In the house of dust sprinkle yourselves with dust” (*Mich.* i. 10). That is, being what you are, do works of penance.

THIRD POINT.—And now that we have learned our lesson of humility may we not venture to invert these solemn words and so learn a lesson of faith, faith in the high and glorious destiny before us, faith in the true dignity of our human nature? “Remember, man,” says the Holy Spirit, “that thou art dust.” “*Remember, dust,*” we may each

of us say, "*that thou art man;*" man endowed with an immortal soul, capable of inconceivable happiness or misery, with an eternity before thee such as thou choosest to make it. Dust as thou art, thou art yet the creature of God, the image of God, coming forth from God and going back to God again. Remember, dust, that thou art man and unto God thou shalt return.

Colloquy with our creator. Miserere, page 383.

MEDITATION XIV

THE PARTICULAR JUDGMENT

Preparatory Prayer and Mental Picture.—I am standing in the presence of Christ. Be the court ever so crowded, the culprit awaiting sentence sees nothing but his judge.

Petition.—Grace to judge myself now, judging no one else, so that I may find mercy at Christ's judgment-seat.

FIRST POINT.—"It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this, the judgment" (*Heb. ix. 27*). When will this judgment take place? The very moment the soul leaves the body. Where? On the very spot where I breathe my last. There will be no time to get up my case; if I am not ready beforehand there is not a chance for me.

Lot's wife was turned to a pillar of salt on the very spot where she looked back upon Sodom, and so it will be with me. "Now is an end come upon thee, and I will send My wrath upon thee, and I will judge thee according to thy ways, and I will set all thy abominations against thee" (*Ezech.* vii. 3).

SECOND POINT.—Who will be there? My soul, created by God for Himself, meant to be happy for ever in heaven, redeemed by the blood of His only Son, enriched with so many graces, and Jesus Christ, the Saviour who died for me, the Good Shepherd who so often went in search of me, who so often forgave my sins and fed me on His own body and blood in the Holy Eucharist.

What if I have rejected His love, abused His mercy, died out of His favor? for now He has come to be my judge.

THIRD POINT.—What will be the procedure in that court? The witness will be my own conscience. Then will everything I have ever thought and said and done come back to mind; my few good deeds—oh, how few and worthless they will then appear!—my numberless sins in all their repulsiveness. I shall not dare to plead "not guilty"; for conscience will prove its charges up to the hilt. "I will search Jerusalem with lamps" (*Soph.* i. 12). So there I shall stand for one awful moment, which will seem an age, before that all-

just Judge. O my God, "Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, for in Thy sight no man living shall be justified. . . . Turn not away Thy face from me, lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit" (*Ps.* cxlii. 2, 7).

At the same time every good deed is on record, even the cup of cold water, as Christ has promised. "Blessed," then, "are the dead who die in the Lord; . . . for their works follow them" (*Apoc.* xiv. 13).

Colloquy with our Saviour. *De Profundis*, page 382.

MEDITATION XV

THE RICH MAN

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—A rich man, finding he had not room to store his abundant harvest, resolved to build larger barns and to make good cheer. But God said to him: Thou fool! this night do they require thy soul of thee (*Luke* xii.).

Mental Picture.—The rich man's house surrounded by many a broad acre of cornfields, vineyards, and olive-groves.

Petition.—To learn wisdom from his folly.

FIRST POINT.—"I will say to my soul: Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years.

Take thy rest, eat, drink, and make good cheer.”

This wretched man deceived himself in three ways :

1. He promised himself a long life, though his last hour had struck.
2. He counted on enjoying his riches, as if he were assured of their possession.
3. He gave not a thought to the next world, although it was so near.

SECOND POINT.—“Thou fool!” And if I act as he did am not I a fool? “What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul?” (*Matt.* xvi. 26.) “This night.” Not an hour’s grace beyond it. This very night. Has not Our Lord warned us that He will come “as a thief in the night”? Was it not at midnight that the cry was raised: “Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye forth to meet him?” (*Matt.* xxv. 26.) Let us work, therefore, “whilst it is day. The night cometh when no man can work” (*John* ix. 4).

THIRD POINT.—“And whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?” This recalls to mind another sudden judgment. King Baltassar is feasting with his courtiers when a hand is seen writing on the wall: *Mane, Thecel, Phares*. And this is Daniel’s interpretation: “Mane, God hath numbered thy kingdom and hath finished it; Thecel, thou art weighed in the balance and art found wanting; Phares, thy kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians. That same

night Baltassar was slain and Darius, the Mede, succeeded to his kingdom'' (*Dan. v.*).

“Watch, therefore, because you know not the day nor the hour” (*Matt. xxv. 13*).

Colloquy with Christ, our Judge. De Profundis, page 382.

MEDITATION XVI

THE GENERAL JUDGMENT—I

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—Fearful signs and portents will usher in the day of doom. The last trumpet will sound, and then will ring out the cry: “Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment.”

Mental Picture.—The earth in darkness, the sea raging furiously.

Petition.—A holy fear.

FIRST POINT.—If every man is judged at his death why should there be a general judgment?

1. For God’s glory, that He may manifest the justice and mercy of His dealings with men.

2. For the glory of Christ. So tradition says that the judgment will take place in the valley of Josaphat, near Jerusalem where He was crucified.

3. For the glory of the saints who have shared in His humiliation.

4. That the sentence passed on each may be made known to all and its justice acknowledged.

5. That the body may be judged along with the soul; for the bodies of the wicked are often held in honor among men, while those of the just are treated with contempt.

6. That the account of each may be fully made up; for every man's life has its effect for good or evil on those who come after him, and it is only at the last day that the reward or punishment due to him can be declared.

SECOND POINT.—Signs and wonders.—God “will arm the creature for the revenge of His enemies . . . and the whole world shall fight with Him against the unwise” (*Wis.* v. 18, 21). And this is just, for all creatures have been abused by the sinner. So “the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven shall be moved” (*Matt.* xxiv. 29). And there shall be “upon the earth distress of nations by reason of the confusion of the roaring of the sea and of the waves, men withering away for fear, and expectation of what shall come upon the whole earth” (*Luke* xxi. 25). And “great tribulation, such as hath not been from the beginning of the world until now, neither shall be” (*Matt.* xxiv. 21). “And the elements shall be melted with heat,

and the earth and the works which are in it shall be burnt up" (2 *Pet.* iii, 10). Yet to the just it is said: "When these things begin to come to pass look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is at hand" (*Luke* xxi, 28).

THIRD POINT.—"Of that day and hour no one knoweth—no, not the angels of heaven; but the Father alone. And, as in the days of Noe, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, even till that day in which Noe entered into the ark, and they knew not till the flood came, and took them all away; so also shall the coming of the Son of man be. . . . Watch ye therefore, because you know not what hour your Lord will come" (*Matt.* xxiv. 36-39, 42).

Colloquy with our Saviour: "We believe that Thou wilt come to be our judge." *Dies Irae*, page 377.

MEDITATION XVII

THE GENERAL JUDGMENT—II

Preparatory Prayer, History, Mental Picture, and Petition, as in preceding meditation.

FIRST POINT.—The last trumpet.—"And He

shall send His angels with a trumpet and a great voice, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest parts of the heavens to the utmost bounds of them" (*Matt.* xxiv. 31). "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall rise again incorruptible. . . . We shall all indeed rise again; but we shall not all be changed" (1 *Cor.* xv, 51, 52). For the bodies of the wicked will be immortal only because their death is eternal. Lest that should be my lot "I will arise, and will go to my father" (*Luke* xv. 18); for it is written: "Rise, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall enlighten thee" (*Eph.* v, 14).

SECOND POINT.—The coming of the Judge.—"And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven"—the cross, perhaps the very cross on which He died; "and then shall all tribes of the earth mourn" (*Matt.* xxiv. 30). But "they that are Christ's," they that have loved His cross, they that "have crucified their flesh with the vices and concupiscences" (*Gal.* v. 24), shall lift up their heads in confidence and joy. And now every eye "shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with much power and majesty" (*Matt.* xxiv. 30); and "in His name every knee shall bow" (*Philipp.* ii, 10). In that hour the Jews and all

impenitent sinners "shall look on Him whom they have pierced" (*Zach.* xii. 10). God grant I may be able to look on Him without fear!

THIRD POINT.—Then shall the books be opened, the book of God's law and the book of man's conscience. We may hide our sins now as much as we like; we may even hide them in the confessional; but then every eye shall see them. How shall I be able to endure that? Even the sins of the just will be laid bare; but the penance they have done for them and their other good works will so flood them with light that they will bring no shame to them, nothing but joy and thankfulness.

Colloquy with Christ our judge to be, but now our advocate, our best friend. May He look kindly on me in that day of wrath. *Dies Irae*, page 377.

MEDITATION XVIII

THE GENERAL JUDGMENT—III

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—Recall what Christ will say to the just and the wicked.

Mental Picture.—That countless multitude gathered together, the sheep on the right of the Good Shepherd, the goats on His left.

Petition.—A holy fear.

FIRST POINT.—“Then shall the King say to them that shall be on His right hand: Come, ye blessed of My Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (*Matt.* xxv. 34). Who would not wish to hear these words said to him? Will they not make up for a long life of self-restraint and self-conquest? “For I was hungry and you gave Me to eat; I was thirsty and you gave Me to drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; naked and you covered Me; sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me. Then shall the just answer Him, saying: Lord, when did we see Thee hungry? . . . And the king answering shall say to them: Amen, I say to you, as long as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren you did it to Me.” And if this is the reward of the corporal works of mercy, what of the spiritual works? What of converting the sinner, instructing the ignorant and the rest? “They that instruct many to justice shall shine as stars for all eternity” (*Dan.* xii. 3).

SECOND POINT.—“Then He shall say to them also that shall be on His left hand: Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels.” Let me weigh each word of this terrible sentence. “*Depart.*” Never before has our Saviour spoken thus. He has always said, “Come unto Me, all ye that labor

and are heavy-burdened, and I will give you rest." Up to this He has been all mercy and sweetness; now He speaks as a just judge. "*Depart from Me,*" your loving Saviour, your good Shepherd, your Father, your God. "*Ye cursed.*" Ah! what an awful curse they have brought upon themselves. "*Into everlasting fire.*" You have made your choice and you must have it; for free will is the sacred right of a nature such as yours. You might have had eternal happiness; you have deliberately chosen eternal misery. "*Prepared for the devil and his angels*"—not for you. I created you to be saved. I died to save you. There was a place waiting for each one of you in heaven, none in hell; but you would not have it so, and now they must make room for you there. "For I was hungry and you gave Me not to eat. . . ." "Then they also shall answer Him, saying: Lord, when did we see Thee hungry or thirsty? Amen, I say to you, as long as ye did it not to one of these least, neither did you do it to Me."

THIRD POINT.—The execution of the sentence.—"And these shall go into everlasting punishment, but the just into life everlasting." Then shall the earth yawn open and lost men and demons be hurled down together into the bottomless pit. "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." But from the ranks of the blessed will arise a mighty song of praise, as they follow their Lord

and Saviour through the gates of heaven: "The Lamb that was slain is worthy to receive power and divinity and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and benediction. Thou hast redeemed us to God in Thy blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation" (*Apoc.* v. 12, 9).

Colloquy with Christ, our Judge. Vexilla Regis, page 402.

MEDITATION XIX

HELL

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

Mental Picture.—Tradition places hell beneath our feet. Whether true or not, this gives us a very serviceable conception of it. Supposing the crust of the earth to be 1000 miles thick and all beyond that to be in a state of fusion, we have a furnace 6000 miles across and more than 18,000 miles in circumference.

Petition.—Grace so to realize the pains of hell that, if ever I come to be forgetful of God's love, at least the fear of eternal damnation may keep me from offending Him.

FIRST POINT.—The pain of sense.—Our Divine Lord has described this as fire. Now, there is nothing we dread so much as fire. A man will face certain death in any other form rather than

stand to be burned. By choosing this term, then, our Saviour must have meant to indicate something terrible, indeed. And surely it is most just that the sinner's body should have its punishment; for, though sin is committed formally in the soul, it is in most cases committed for the sake of the body. Moreover, the body helps the soul to do both good and evil; so it is right that the bodies of the just should be rewarded and those of the wicked punished. Let me grieve over the bad use I have made of my limbs and my senses and consecrate them henceforth to the service of my God with those of Christ our Lord.

SECOND POINT.—The pain of loss.—This is what the soul endures. It is the essential torture of hell, compared with which the sensible pain, terrible as it is, is insignificant. It means the loss of God and, in God, of everything worth having. Henceforth for all eternity it must live on without joy, without love, without hope. When these are gone how can a man be happy? Is not life an intolerable curse? One may indeed bear up for a time under a joyless, loveless existence if only some small remnant of hope is left; but in hell there is no hope. Then there is what Our Lord has called "the worm that dieth not," that is the maddening thought of what might have been, the bitter remembrance of lost opportunities, graces rejected, sins committed, which then seemed pleas-

ant, but now cause nothing but anguish. All these cruel memories and others like them gnaw at the heart like a worm that never rests. Let me grieve for the ill uses to which I have put my mental faculties, my memory, imagination, intellect, and will, consecrating them also to God with those of His divine Son.

THIRD POINT.—It is not God's will, but dead against it, that any man should fall into hell. It is not He that casts us off, but we Him. We damn our own souls, and sadly He lets us go, because so we will have it; for He has made us free and can not in justice refuse to let us have our way. Our blessed Saviour tells us to fear "Him who can destroy both body and soul into hell" (*Matt. x. 28*); and, mark this well, He does not say who *will*, but who *can*; for "As I live, saith the Lord God, I desire not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way, and live" (*Ezech. xxxiii. 11*). The sentence passed on the reprobate at the Last Judgment puts this beyond question. The kingdom was prepared *for you*, the fire *not* for you, but *for the devil and his angels*. God therefore meant all men to be saved; Christ shed His blood for all; it is our own fault if we lose our souls. Yet why does not God in mercy destroy His rebellious creatures? Destroy them! Why should He? The soul is by nature immortal; why should God, because He is defied, undo His own

work and destroy what He meant to be indestructible? Yet in very truth God is so good and merciful that He would forgive every lost soul and even Satan himself if they would only turn to Him in repentance; but that they will not and can not do; by their own act they have made it impossible; their will is so warped and perverted that if pardon were offered they would refuse it. Hell, therefore, is a necessary consequence of the abuse of free will. It is no argument against God's mercy—"His mercy endureth for ever" (*Ps. cv. 1*).

Colloquy with Christ on the cross. As I think of those wretched souls in hell, some because they did not believe in Him, some because they would not keep His law, I will give thanks that I am not among them, and that my God is still so good and kind to me. *Te Deum*, page 399.

THE FIRST METHOD OF PRAYER

FOR ACQUIRING PURITY OF CONSCIENCE

MENTION has been made on page 26 of St. Ignatius' three methods of prayer, the first of which is specially valuable as a means of acquiring purity of heart. In this form of prayer we discuss the seven deadly sins, the ten commandments, the three powers of the soul, the five senses of the

body. The following meditations deal with each in turn.

As for the seven capital or deadly sins, they are the source of all other sins and are signified in Holy Writ by the seven heads of the infernal dragon (*Apoc.* xiii), and by the seven pagan nations of Palestine, which had to be subdued before God's people could enter into possession. It was not at the first onset that they conquered them, but little by little; and the same thing happens to us; for, though by contrition and confession our sins are taken away, there still remain evil habits and inordinate affections, which can be only gradually brought under control. So it was that Moses said to the children of Israel: "Thou shalt not fear them, because the Lord thy God is in the midst of thee, a God mighty and terrible. He will consume these nations in thy sight by little and little" (*Deut.* vii. 21).

With regard to each of these sins we shall consider:

1. What the sin consists in, be it mortal or venial.

2. The evil of yielding to it and the penalty attaching to it here and hereafter.

3. The reward held out to those that overcome.

The other subjects, the commandments, etc., will be handled very much in the same way.

The Seven Deadly Sins

MEDITATION XX

PRIDE

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

PLACE yourself humbly in God's presence. "O God, be merciful to me, a sinner" (*Luke* xviii. 13). Then kneel down and pray for grace to know how you have offended in this matter and to amend your conduct in future.

FIRST POINT.—The nature of pride.—Pride is an inordinate desire of excellence either in the gifts of the body or in those of the mind. It acts in four ways:

1. It leads us to attribute to ourselves what belongs to God, saying: "By the strength of my own hand I have done it, and by my own wisdom I have understood" (*Is.* x. 13).

2. It prompts us, while acknowledging that our power comes from God, to count that as due to our own merit which is really His free gift.

3. It breeds presumption, making us think ourselves greater than we are.

4. It teaches us to prefer ourselves to others, or at least wish that they should give way to us.

Many vices are the offspring of pride.

1. Vainglory, an ill-regulated desire of the es-

teem and praise of men. This shows itself in self-satisfaction over the good qualities we possess, or fancy we possess—nay, even our bad qualities. Then follows a feverish anxiety to please others, for the sake of their praise, and, lastly, an empty joy that we have pleased them and stand high in their estimation. The worst kind of vainglory is that over mental gifts and acquirements, especially the virtues, of which of course it is the death.

2. Boastfulness, which leads us to vaunt ourselves, to make a pretence of what we have not got, to exaggerate what we have, and to publish what we ought to hide.

3. Ambition of honors and dignities, which becomes inordinate when we aim at what is beyond our deserts, use unbecoming means, or show excessive eagerness, as though such things were the end of our being.

4. Hypocrisy, when good is done to catch men's commendation or a pure intention affected as a cloak of vanity.

5. Obstinacy, when, regardless of better counsel, we hold our own course rather than admit we are wrong.

6. Contempt of others, not only of those below us, but of our equals, and even of our superiors. Hence arise discord, quarreling, disobedience.

Let me enter into my heart and, acknowledging my failings in each kind, bitterly reproach myself.

Wretched man! "What hast thou that thou hast not received?" (1 *Cor.* iv. 7.) "Thou sayest: I am rich, and made wealthy, and have need of nothing; and knowest not, that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (*Apoc.* iii. 17). "Why is earth and ashes proud?" (*Eccles.* x. 9.) Hateful to God is "a poor man that is proud" (*Eccles.* xxv. 4). *Our Father.*

SECOND POINT.—The punishment of pride.—"Whosoever shall exalt himself shall be humbled" (*Matt.* xxiii. 12). This implies a threefold penalty. He shall be stripped of what he has, defrauded of what he hopes to get, and his high flight shall be brought low. So it was with Lucifer. He lost those wondrous gifts of grace wherewith God had endowed him, failed to reach the throne he had aspired after, and from his lofty elevation in heaven was hurled down into the bottomless pit. "I saw Satan like lightning falling from heaven" (*Luke* x. 18). Moreover God deprives the proud of His special help and allows them—worst punishment of all!—to fall into disgraceful sins. But their humiliation only begins in this life; hereafter it will be complete; for the demons will be forever casting it in their teeth: "Thou art become like unto us. Thy pride is brought down to hell" (*Is.* xiv. 10, 11). O most humble Jesus, take this beam of pride out of my eye, that I may see myself as I am! *Our Father.*

THIRD POINT.—The reward of humility.—“He that humbleth himself shall be exalted.” The reward, like the punishment, is threefold; for the humble man shall be rescued from abjection and misery, confirmed in the possession of what he has, and raised to great honor. A sinner who humbles himself is delivered from sin, is strengthened with grace, and becomes the child of God. Thus it was that the humble publican went down justified before God rather than the proud pharisee, and thus even the impious Achab, having humbled himself, averted the chastisement hanging over his head (*3 Kings* xxi. 29). But if self-humiliation brings grace to the sinner how much more to the just! “So the greater thou art, the more humble thyself in all things, and thou shalt find grace before God” (*Ecclus.* iii. 20). It was the humility of the holy Virgin that drew down on her God’s favor: “He hath regarded the lowliness of his handmaid.” And of our Saviour it is written: “He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross; for which cause God also hath exalted Him, and hath given Him a name which is above all names” (*Philipp.* ii. 8). “He that humbleth himself shall be exalted” is a fundamental law of God’s kingdom, knowing no exception.

I resolve therefore to root pride out of my heart and plant humility in its stead. That, I know

well, can be done only at the cost of humiliation; yet, as St. Bernard says: "To one who really wishes for humility nothing is easier than self-humiliation" (Lenten Sermon ii). *Our Father.*

MEDITATION XXI

COVETOUSNESS, OR AVARICE

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

FIRST POINT.—The nature of covetousness.—It is an inordinate desire of riches. We are guilty of it when we hold so tightly to our money that we give nothing to those in need, neglect our obligations, or fall to lying, perjury, fraud or violence, in order to keep what we have or to gain more. "The desire of money," says St. Paul, "is the root of all evils" (1 *Tim.* vi. 10). Elsewhere he calls it "the serving of idols" (*Ephes.* v. 5). For some men make a god of their money, thinking of it by day, dreaming of it by night, till it fills the whole field of their vision and takes the place of God. Examine yourself, and say the *Our Father.*

SECOND POINT.—The punishment of covetousness. 1. In this life, loss of peace; for nothing brings so much trouble as money. The more one has the more he wants; yet to get it, to keep it, to spend it—all involve constant anxiety. The rich

man finds no real peace in his riches and loses that peace "which surpasseth all understanding"; so, like the wretched Judas, hanging between heaven and earth, he is "burst asunder in the midst."

2. In the next life, eternal penury; for a dying man can not take his money with him, and, if he could, of what use would it be? "Woe to you that are rich, for you have your consolation," such as it is. "Woe to you that are filled; for you shall hunger" (*Luke*, vi. 24, 25). *Our Father*.

THIRD POINT.—The reward of liberality.—"Give, and it shall be given to you. Good measure and pressed down and shaken together and running over shall they give into your bosom; for with the same measure that you shall mete withal, it shall be measured to you again" (*Luke* vi. 38).

The reward of poverty.—"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (*Matt.* v. 3). The poor in spirit are those who, whether they have the good things of this life or no, set not their hearts upon them.

I resolve, then, first, to be content with what I have, however little it be; second, to use it well and to be liberal to those that are poorer than myself; third, not to set my heart on worldly possessions; but to have as though I had not. Fourth, to serve God for His own sake, and not for any temporal gain, knowing that He will reward me in heaven. *Our Father*.

MEDITATION XXII

LUST

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

FIRST POINT.—The nature of lust.—It is an inordinate desire for the pleasure of the flesh. It is committed in thought when we take deliberate and wilful pleasure in dwelling on some unclean image—this is known as “*morose delectation*”; or when we are merely slow and negligent in repelling such a thought or avoiding what causes it; but in this latter case the sin is not mortal.

It is committed also by want of control over our senses, especially our sight, or by word, when we speak lasciviously; and then, of course, the sin is aggravated by scandal.

It is committed in act when we do deeds of impurity, either alone or with another, and in the latter case there is again the additional guilt of scandal, which is one among other reasons why this sin is so hateful in God’s sight, the impure man being like a rotten sheep, which is certain to infect the rest of the flock. Examine yourself, and say the Our Father.

SECOND POINT.—The punishment of lust.—
1. From the law of nature: Frightful and loathsome diseases, loss of reputation, and even lunacy are the natural results of great excesses. More-

over, irreparable ruin wrought in others and life-long remorse in consequence.

2. From God in this life: The Flood and the destruction of Sodom are examples of His wrath against this sin; and, as an atonement for it, He suffered His only Son to be scourged at the pillar.

3. From God in the next life: A punishment that has no end. Therefore, "If thy hand or thy foot scandalize thee cut it off. If thy eye scandalize thee pluck it out." Far better this than "to be cast into the hell of unquenchable fire, where their worm dieth not and their fire is not extinguished" (*Mark ix. 42*).

Hearken then to St. Paul: "Fornication and all uncleanness . . . let it not so much as be named among you, as becometh saints" (*Ephes. v. 3*).
Our Father.

THIRD POINT.—The reward of chastity.—1. The special assistance of the angels, who love those that are like themselves. In our temptations they will be at hand, as they were to the Three Children in the fiery furnace, making "the midst of the furnace like the blowing of a wind bringing dew," so that "the fire touched them not at all, nor troubled them, nor did them any harm" (*Dan. iii. 50*).

2. The loving protection of God Himself, "who feedeth among the lilies" (*Cant. ii. 16*), that is, "the clean of heart."

So, when tempted, I will cry out with the patriarch Joseph: "How can I do this wicked thing, and sin against my God?" (*Gen.* xxxix. 9). *Our Father.*

MEDITATION XXIII

ANGER

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

FIRST POINT.—The nature of anger.—It is an inordinate feeling of indignation. If allowed to rankle in the heart it develops into hatred and revenge, and leads to many sins in word and action against God and our neighbor.

Examine yourself and say the *Our Father*.

SECOND POINT.—The punishment of anger.—

1. It is its own punishment; for it is a sort of madness in which the brute within us gets the upper hand, urging us on to say and do what we are sure to regret afterwards.

2. It destroys the peace of the soul.

3. It brings down God's vengeance. "I say to you that whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother 'Raca' shall be in danger of the council; and whosoever shall say 'Thou fool' shall be in danger of hell-fire" (*Matt.* v. 22). The term "fool" evidently had of old a much worse meaning

than it has with us. At the same time, Our Lord's words show clearly that bitter and insulting language of any sort is most offensive to the God of love. There is, of course, such a thing as just anger; but even that must be kept well under control, or it becomes inordinate and blameworthy. *Our Father.*

THIRD POINT.—The reward of meekness.—1. In this world. “Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land” (*Matt.* v, 4). That is, possessing their own souls in peace, they shall acquire a marvelous power over others and so shall rule the world. “My son, do thy works in meekness and thou shalt be beloved above the glory of men” (*Ecclus.* iii. 19). “The patient man is better than the valiant, and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh cities” (*Prov.* xvi. 32).

2. In the next world. The meek walk in the footsteps of Christ, who was “led as a sheep to the slaughter” and was “dumb as a lamb before his shearer” (*Is.* liii. 7); “who when He was reviled did not revile; when He suffered He threatened not” (*1 Pet.* ii. 23). But “if we suffer we shall also reign with Him” (*2 Tim.* ii. 12). The meek, therefore, shall possess that blessed land along with their King whom they have loved so well.

Henceforth, then, I will try to control my temper, by foreseeing the occasions that may excite it, and by prayerful meditation on the meekness

of the Lamb of God. How often in the Passion we read that "Jesus held His peace!" *Our Father.*

MEDITATION XXIV

GLUTTONY

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

FIRST POINT.—The nature of gluttony.—It is an inordinate indulgence in meat and drink. We may exceed in quantity to the injury of body and soul, or in quality, by being fastidious or extravagant as to our food, or in the manner of taking it, by indecent eagerness, or so as to indicate that we regard it as the main object of life.

Examine yourself and say the *Our Father*.

SECOND POINT.—The punishment of gluttony.—
1. In the body. Health is impaired and death hastened. "Watching and choler and gripes are with an intemperate man" (*Ecclus.* xxxi. 23). "Look not upon the wine when it is yellow, when the color thereof shineth in the glass. It goeth in pleasantly; but in the end it will bite like a snake and will spread abroad poison like a basilisk" (*Prov.* xxiii. 31, 32).

2. In the soul. It renders us unfit for prayer, unworthy of spiritual consolation, slothful in God's service, incapable of doing anything great and noble, and leaves us at the mercy of every

gross temptation; for, having been worsted by so weak a foe, how shall we withstand the mightier? Therefore, "take heed to yourselves, lest perhaps your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness and the cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly" (*Luke* xxi. 34).

3. The Israelites, growing weary of the manna, sighed for the fleshpots of Egypt. Thereupon quails fell in the midst of their camp. "So they did eat and were filled exceedingly. . . . And yet their meat was in their mouth, and the wrath of God came upon them, and He slew the fat ones among them" (*Psa.* lxxvii. 28).

The parable of Dives and Lazarus shows us how gluttony is punished hereafter. That rich man "feasted sumptuously every day"; but the time came when a single drop of water was refused to him. "As much as she hath glorified herself, and lived in delicacies, so much torment and sorrow give ye to her" (*Apoc.* xviii. 7).

Let me not be such a fool then as to sell my birthright, like Esau, for a mess of pottage. *Our Father.*

THIRD POINT.—The reward of temperance.—It preserves health, prolongs life, keeps the mind clear and active, subdues concupiscence, fits us for great achievements and for communication with God. If I crucify my flesh, then, "with the vices and concupiscences," I shall some day be worthy

to take my place at that great feast which the King of heaven has made for His Son.

Good Jesus, by Thy thirst, Thy vinegar and gall, give me control over my animal appetites. *Our Father.*

MEDITATION XXV

ENVY

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

FIRST POINT.—The nature of envy.—It is an inordinate sadness on account of another's good, inasmuch as we regard it as an injury to ourselves. Ambition is usually allied with envy; for the passionate wish to attain an object tends to make us feel embittered when what we have set our hearts on having falls to another. There is an honest emulation, however, which is quite compatible with charity; for we may be sorry to have lost a prize without being angry that another has taken it. Examine yourself, and say the *Our Father*.

SECOND POINT.—The punishment of envy.—
1. It is so mean and despicable a feeling that he who gives way to it does his best to hide it even from himself; yet, like murder, "it will out." If the tongue keeps the secret the face will betray it, and ridicule and contempt is its just reward.

2. It leads to the greatest crimes, as we see from the stories of Cain killing his brother Abel, the

sons of Jacob selling their brother Joseph, Saul attempting the life of David, the Jews crucifying their Lord and Saviour.

3. It is an alliance of the soul with Satan, giving him a terrible hold over it; for "By the envy of the devil death came into the world; and they follow him that are of his side" (*Wis. ii. 24*). *Our Father.*

THIRD POINT.—The reward of brotherly love.—

1. By rejoicing in our neighbor's success as if it were our own we greatly increase our own happiness; for we thereby cut off a fruitful source of trouble and uneasiness.

2. We secure God's friendship; for He takes as done to Himself what we do to our neighbor.

Let me say, then, with that generous and princely lover, St. John Baptist: "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom who standeth and heareth him rejoiceth with joy because of the bridegroom's voice. This my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease" (*John iii. 29*). *Our Father.*

MEDITATION XXVI

SLOTH

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

FIRST POINT.—The nature of sloth.—It is a

sluggishness of the soul in the pursuit of virtue, arising either from a low appreciation of it or an exaggerated estimate of the difficulties in the way. "The fool foldeth his hands together and eateth his own flesh, saying: Better is a handful with rest, than both hands full with labor, and vexation of mind" (*Eccles.* iv. 5).

The fruits of sloth are despondency, cowardice, inconstancy, and dissipation. Examine yourself and say the Our Father.

SECOND POINT.—The punishment of sloth.—

1. Limbs that are never used become atrophied and useless, and the same thing happens when the powers of the soul have lain long dormant; they become incapable of action, paralyzed. Faith and hope and charity burn lower and lower, and finally die out, and every other virtue dies with them.

2. The grace of God is to the soul what the blood is to the body; a feeble circulation is a sign of approaching death. In the slothful soul the action of grace grows weaker and weaker; if it stops death must ensue.

3. Consequently sloth lays us open to the grossest sins. The guards are asleep at their posts and the city is at the mercy of its enemies. "Rise, then, thou that sleepest and arise from the dead, and Christ will enlighten thee" (*Ephes.* v. 14). "This is now the hour for us to rise from sleep"

(*Rom. xiii. 11*). "The night cometh when no man can work" (*John ix. 4*). *Our Father*.

THIRD POINT.—The reward of earnestness.—1. "Peace and joy in the Holy Ghost" (*Rom. xiv. 17*). It is thus the Church sings in the "*Veni, Sancte Spiritus*":

"Best Comforter, right welcome guest,
Brood as the dove upon her nest
Here in our hearts and give them rest.

"For rest to them that toil art Thou,
In noonday heat a shady bough
And mirth upon the moody brow."

2. Christ's yoke, according to His promise, becomes sweet and His burden light.

3. "God loveth a cheerful giver" (2 *Cor. ix. 7*). Therefore I will sing, with holy David: "To Thee, O God, my God, I will give praise upon the harp. Why art thou sad, O my soul, and why dost thou disquiet me? Hope in God; for I will still give praise to Him, the salvation of my countenance and my God" (*Ps. xlii. 5*). *Our Father*.

MEDITATION XXVII

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

PLACE yourself humbly in God's presence: "O God, be merciful to me, a sinner" (*Luke xviii. 13*). Then kneel down and pray earnestly for light to understand what each commandment pre-

scribes and forbids, and how you have broken it, and for strength to keep it faithfully in future.

FIRST POINT.—The *first commandment* prescribes the worship of God, and we worship God by faith, hope, charity, and religion.

The sins against faith are idolatry, disbelief, and doubt.

A Christian is guilty of idolatry when he lets any creature whatever take the place of God, that is, the first place in his heart; for God ought to come first.

Disbelief or even doubt of God's revelation is sinful; for as He is all wise and all true we owe Him an absolute and unhesitating faith.

The sins against hope are, on the one side, distrust of obtaining forgiveness or salvation and, on the other, presumption of obtaining them without using the appointed means.

The sins against charity are the preference of any creature to God and a half-hearted love of Him.

The sins against religion are the neglect of prayer and of public worship. Examine yourself, and say the Our Father.

The *second commandment* forbids oaths, unless they are truthful, necessary, and reverent. It is sinful to swear to what we know to be false or to promise what we do not intend to fulfil; sinful also to refuse to fulfil an oath or a promise which is

just and good; but if it be unjust it is sinful to make it and sinful to keep it. God's name—to say nothing of blasphemy—must not be invoked lightly, and vows, or solemn promises made to Him must be kept. Examine yourself, and say the Our Father.

The *third commandment* commands us to keep the Sunday holy; so we must hear Mass and rest from servile work. Examine yourself, and say the Our Father.

The *fourth commandment* bids us honor our parents, that is, love, reverence, and obey them, as our other lawful superiors in all that is not sin. We are also bound to support our parents in their old age. Examine yourself, and say the Our Father.

The *fifth commandment* forbids murder and also anger, hatred, and revenge, which lead up to it. Scandal, too, or bad example, is against this commandment, for it is the murder of the soul. Examine yourself, and say the Our Father.

The *sixth commandment* forbids adultery and all sins of uncleanness. Of these we treated in Meditation XXII. Examine yourself, and say the Our Father.

The *seventh commandment* forbids theft and dishonest dealing of every kind. Examine yourself, and say the Our Father.

The *eighth commandment* forbids false witness

against our neighbor; and under this come calumny, or false accusation, detraction, or damaging another's good name by repeating what, though true, we have no right to mention, rash judgment, which is robbing another on insufficient grounds of our own good opinion, and all lies which do him any kind of harm. Examine yourself, and say the *Our Father*.

The *ninth commandment* forbids impure thoughts and desires. Examine yourself, and say the *Our Father*.

The *tenth commandment* forbids covetous and envious thoughts. Examine yourself, and say the *Our Father*.

SECOND POINT.—The punishment that follows the violation of these commandments.—1. As they are each and all but divine affirmations of the law of nature, the breaking of any one of them brings with it a natural penalty; and all the sufferings and miseries men have to endure are attributable to their disobedience or the disobedience of their forefathers to this holy law. If men would only begin to keep these ten commandments life would be a vast deal happier than it is now.

2. By them we shall be judged at the last day. If we have not kept them and die impenitent we shall never see the face of God, but “shall go into everlasting fire.” *Our Father*.

THIRD POINT.—The reward for keeping them.

1. Temporal blessings: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you" (*Matt.* vi. 33).

2. Eternal joy: "Well done, good and faithful servant; because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" (*Matt.* xxv. 23).

Let me, therefore, be heartily sorry for my past transgressions and resolve with God's help to be a faithful servant for the rest of my life. *Our Father.*

MEDITATION XXVIII

THE FIVE SENSES

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

Place yourself humbly in God's presence: "O God, be merciful to me, a sinner" (*Luke* xviii. 13). Then kneel down and pray earnestly for light to know what your senses were given you for, and for strength henceforth to keep them under control.

FIRST POINT.—Your senses were given you that you might rise from created things to their Creator and that, knowing Him, you might praise, reverence, and serve Him. You sin therefore by your

Sight, when you read bad books or wilfully look at what is suggestive and dangerous. Examine yourself, and say the *Our Father*.

Hearing, when you wilfully listen to what is against faith, purity, or charity. Examine yourself, and say the Our Father.

Smell and Taste, when you allow them inordinate indulgence. Examine yourself, and say the Our Father.

Touch, when you are effeminate and over fond of comfort, and, above all, when you give way to lasciviousness. Examine yourself, and say the Our Father.

SECOND POINT.—The punishment for all this.—1. Sins of all kinds are committed; “for death is come up through our windows” (*Jer.* ix. 21); these senses are the windows of the soul.

2. The immortal soul becomes enslaved to the corruptible body, following its animal instincts and losing all attraction for what is good and noble. “The vessel that hath no cover, nor binding over it, shall be unclean” (*Num.* xix. 15).

3. The torments of hell. “The more thou sparkest thyself now and followest the flesh, so much the more dearly shalt thou pay for it hereafter, and the more fuel dost thou lay up for that fire. In what things a man hath most sinned in those things shall he be most grievously punished” (A Kempis, i. 24). *Our Father*.

THIRD POINT.—The reward of custody of the senses.—1. Great peace of soul; for, far away from the foolish distractions of this world, it lies

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still and unruffled as a mountain lake. It is "a garden enclosed, a fountain sealed up" (*Cant.* iv. 12).

2. That being so, God comes to walk in this garden, as He walked with Adam and Eve in paradise. It is only when He is alone with us that He fully communicates Himself.

3. Hereafter in heaven every sense will be filled with delight, wherefore let me resolve to use my senses solely for the glory of God and the saving of my soul. I will consecrate them to this end through those of Jesus Christ. *Anima Christi*, page 376.

MEDITATION XXIX

THE THREE POWERS OF THE SOUL

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

Place yourself humbly in God's presence: "O God, be merciful to me, a sinner" (*Luke* xviii. 13). Then kneel down and pray earnestly for light to know the nobility of your soul and its capacity for happiness, and for strength to devote all its powers to the service of God.

FIRST POINT.—Memory.—Surrounded, as we are, on every side by the proofs of God's thoughtful love, we ought to keep Him always in mind; for this visible creation is like a picture-book,

meant to remind us of the great God who made it. "In Him we live and move and are" (*Acts* xviii. 28). "As the Lord of hosts liveth, in whose sight I stand" (*4 Kings* iii. 14). But God is not only all around us; He is within us, as in a temple sacred to His praise. How, then, can we forget Him? Our memory is always at our service for business or pleasure; we never forget our meals; but God, our Creator, our Preserver, our first beginning, our last end, how seldom do we think on Him! "Will a virgin forget her ornament, or a bride her stomacher? But my people hath forgotten Me days without number" (*Jer.* ii. 32). Far otherwise was it with holy David: "I will meditate on Thy commandments, and I will consider Thy ways. I will think of Thy justifications; I will not forget Thy words. . . . In the night I have remembered Thy name, O Lord, and have kept Thy law" (*Ps.* cxviii. 15, 16, 55). "O God, my God, to Thee do I watch at break of day. . . . I will meditate on Thee in the morning, because Thou hast been my helper" (*Ps.* lxii. 1). Examine yourself, and say the Our Father.

SECOND POINT.—Understanding.—This it is which distinguishes us from every other being on the face of the earth; and why was it given to us? First and foremost that we might apprehend the works of God and so rise from them to Him, from the creature to the Creator; and, though we were

meant to use it for the acquirement of knowledge, for government, for business, for inventions of all kinds, the glory of God is always to be its ultimate object. "Behold," says Moses, "the Lord hath called by name Beseleel, the son of Uri . . . and hath filled him with the spirit of God, with wisdom and understanding and knowledge and all learning, to devise and work in gold and silver and brass and in engraving stones and in carpenter's work" (*Ex.* xxxv. 30-33).

Yet men commonly use this great gift of intelligence without any reference to Him who gave it. To please Him, to glorify Him does not enter into their calculations. They think, they plan, they execute for their own glory and their own satisfaction. Let us rather pray, with David: "Give me understanding, and I will search Thy law; and I will keep it with my whole heart" (*Ps.* cxviii. 34).

Examine yourself, and say the Our Father.

THIRD POINT.—Will.—Free will is the necessary consequence of the possession of understanding; for the power to discern good from evil implies the power to choose between them. Our will, therefore, was given to us that we might yield God a free service, doing that which is pleasing in His sight, not of necessity, like the brute creation, but from free choice and love. It is the privilege and glory of our human nature that we can return God's love for us. Yet how often we abuse this

privilege! How often we deliberately break the easy laws He has imposed on us, acting like animals following our natural instincts, yielding to the impulse of the moment, instead of looking to our God for guidance. "With desolation is all the land made desolate, because there is none that considereth in the heart" (*Jer. xii. 11*).

I will consecrate my memory, then, to God the Father, for He is the creator of all things; my intellect, to God the Son, for He is the light of the world; my will to God the Holy Ghost, for He is the comforter, the giver of strength. Examine yourself, and say the Our Father. *Sume, Domine*, page 398.

INSTRUCTION

THE GENERAL EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

To be made for a quarter of an hour twice or at least once a day.

Five Points, in memory of the Five Wounds of Christ.

1. Thank God for your creation, preservation, and redemption; for all the sacraments you have received, especially holy communion, and for all the blessings of the past day, or half-day.

2. Ask for grace to know your sins and to be truly sorry for them.

3. Make your Particular Examen; note down your faults and renew your good purpose. Then make your General Examen, recalling any thought, word, deed, or omission by which you have offended God since the last examen.

4. Make a fervent act of contrition for these and the sins of your past life. This is the most important point of all and should have more time given to it than the rest.

5. See what you ought to do in order to correct your faults, and make earnest resolutions. Finish with the Our Father. If you have any time over recite the *Miserere* or *De Profundis* according to the Third Method of Prayer.

THE PARTICULAR EXAMEN

This is an excellent means for rooting out our habitual faults. It consists in giving our special attention to one at a time. Its use is very ancient, for it is recommended by Cassian; but St. Ignatius has drawn up more exact rules for it. It should be brought to bear first of all on faults that cause pain or annoyance to others.

1. While dressing in the morning resolve firmly to be on the watch against the defect you are trying to overcome.

2. Whenever during the course of the day you fall into it strike your breast in such a way as not

to attract attention and make a short act of sorrow.

3. Examine yourself on it at your General Examen; but if you make this only at night make your Particular Examen about mid-day and note down the number of faults in a little book ruled for the purpose. Do the same at night.

4. Add up the score each day, each week and, if you like, each month, and compare the results, to see what progress you are making.

5. As occasions vary a great deal, we shall find that we sometimes fall frequently and at other times not at all. This tends to make us grow tired of our Particular Examen and perhaps drop it as of no use. The best remedy for this is, at the same time that we watch the fault, to make a certain number of opposite acts and to count our failures therein along with the faults. This always gives us something to mark and keeps the examen a going concern.

MEDITATION XXX

THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

Mental Picture.—Think of yourself as a convicted criminal waiting for the judge to pronounce sentence of death.

Petition.—Grace to accuse and condemn yourself beforehand; for “If we would judge ourselves we should not be judged” (1 *Cor.* xi. 31).

FIRST POINT.—The excellence of this sacrament.—To God alone it belongs to forgive sin; yet, for the benefit of the sinner, He has been pleased to confer this power on men who themselves stand in need of forgiveness, who, having “suffered and been tempted,” are able “to succor them also that are tempted” (*Heb.* ii. 18). And this power is granted absolutely, without any restriction as to the number or gravity of the sins to be remitted. “Whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven” (*John* xx. 23). How great is Thy goodness, O God, and how ready, how eager Thou art to pardon our sins! Of this sacrament of mercy Thy prophet spoke: “In that day there shall be a fountain open to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for the washing of the sinner and of the unclean woman” (*Zach.* xiii. 1).

SECOND POINT.—Sacramental confession is an act of many virtues.—1. An act of supreme faith in the word of the Son of God. 2. An act of hope; for it shows our trust in the divine mercy. 3. An act of charity; for it proves our sorrow for having offended God and our desire to make atonement. 4. An act of humility; for, though faith helps to make it easy, it is in itself a most painful thing to acknowledge our hidden sins to our fel-

low man. 5. An act of obedience; for we overcome our repugnance in submission to our Saviour's command.

For all these reasons confession is most meritorious and most acceptable in God's sight.

THIRD POINT.—The fruits of this Sacrament.—“The kingdom of God is justice, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost” (*Rom. xiv. 17*).

That justice or holiness is a result of sacramental absolution is evident, since it restores the soul to God's favor, and even in the case of those who have no grave sins to confess brings an increase of grace; so “he that is just, let him be justified still; and he that is holy, let him be sanctified still” (*Apoc. xxii. 11*).

Friendship being now established between God and His penitent creature, there comes into the heart that peace “which surpasseth all understanding” (*Philipp. iv. 7*), and joy, such as David felt when he thought of the great mercy shown to him: “To my hearing Thou shalt give joy and gladness; and the bones that have been humbled shall rejoice” (*Psa. l. 10*).

All this should encourage us to make a humble confession of our sins. The pain it gives is slight indeed compared with what might justly have been exacted. As Naaman's servants said to their master: “Father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing surely thou shouldst have done it; how

much rather what he now hath said to thee: Wash, and thou shalt be clean'' (4 *Kings* v. 13).

Colloquy with Christ crucified. Anima Christi,
page 376.

INSTRUCTION

CONFESSION AND AFTER

The three requisites on the part of the penitent are contrition, confession, and satisfaction.

Contrition is a hearty sorrow for sin arising from some supernatural motive, a motive, that is, connected with the life to come and so founded on faith. Fear of hell and hope of heaven are wise and excellent motives; yet, as they are selfish, they give birth only to an imperfect sorrow, known as imperfect contrition or attrition. Love of God is unselfish, and the sorrow born of it is perfect contrition. Attrition is sufficient for absolution; but to a man dying in mortal sin without being able to receive absolution perfect contrition is of necessity; for attrition can not of itself remit sin. We should, therefore, take care to live in a habit of perfect contrition for we can never be sure of having a priest with us at the end.

Confession is the acknowledgment of our sins to a priest. It should be clear and simple, without excuse or exaggeration, and, in case of mortal sin,

precise, so far as may be, as to the kind of sin and its frequency.

Satisfaction is doing the penance imposed by the priest and also making such atonement as he prescribes for injuries inflicted on others.

There should follow a firm resolve by God's help to keep out of sin for the time to come; and this should not be a mere vague wish to be good, but a practical determination to avoid dangerous occasions and to take all such means as are necessary to prevent a relapse. "Behold, thou art made whole. Sin no more, lest some worse thing happen to thee" (*John v*, 14).

Conclude with thanksgiving, recalling the many and great benefits received in this sacrament of mercy. *De Profundis*, page 382.

MEDITATION XXXI

HOLY COMMUNION

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—"And whilst they were at supper Jesus took bread and blessed and broke and gave to His disciples and said: Take ye and eat; This is My body" (*Matt.* xxvi. 26).

Mental Picture.—Our Saviour with His own body in His hands.

Petition.—Deep faith and love.

FIRST POINT.—The majesty of the Guest.—He is God, the King of kings and the Lord of lords, the Creator and Preserver of all things, Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.

He is man; He who lay for nine months in His blessed Mother's womb, enriching her with heaven's best gifts; He who cleansed His Forerunner from original sin; He who blessed the shepherds and the magi. Has He no blessing for me? "He that is mighty," sang the holy Virgin, "hath done great things to me." May I not be certain that He will do great things for me also? Later on He "went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the devil" (*Acts* x. 38). Surely, then, He will heal me. Nay, I know that He died on the cross for my sake. Therefore I will cast myself at His feet with Magdalen and wash them with my tears, saying with the woman in the crowd: "If I shall touch only His garment, I shall be healed" (*Matt.* ix. 21) and with St. Thomas, as he saw and touched His wounded hands and side: "My Lord, and my God!" (*John* xx. 23).

The vileness of the entertainer.—A wretched creature with a corruptible body and a sin-stained soul! "Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof; but only say the word and my soul shall be healed" (*Matt.* viii. 8).

SECOND POINT.—The marvelous nature of this visit.—Had He offered Himself to my sight, that I might look on Him as the Jews of old looked on the brazen serpent and were healed; had He allowed me to touch Him, that virtue might go out of Him to make me clean, that would have been a wondrous condescension, an unspeakable mercy; but it would not have satisfied His love. He must become my food and mingle His substance with mine, His flesh with my flesh, His blood with my blood! O Lord Jesus, “the angels and the arch-angels stand in reverential awe; the saints and the just are afraid; and Thou sayest: Come ye all to Me! Unless Thou, O Lord, didst say this who could believe it to be true, and unless Thou didst command it who would venture to approach?” (*Á Kempis*, iv. 1.)

THIRD POINT.—The object of it.—My salvation and my sanctification is what the good Jesus has in view. He comes to me as my Saviour, to apply to my soul the precious blood shed on the cross, as my physician, to heal all my infirmities, as my master, to teach and enlighten me, as my good shepherd, to find me, His lost sheep, and lead me to the pastures of life.

Let me, then, declare to Him my faith, my hope, my adoring love. “I believe, O my God; help Thou my unbelief.” “I hope in Thee; let me not be confounded forever.” I love Thee, my Sa-

viour; teach me to love Thee more and more.

Colloquy with our hidden God. Pange lingua,
page 386.

INSTRUCTION

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

THIS consists in a loving desire to receive Our Lord and is the very best preparation for sacramental communion. It may, of course, be made at any time and in any place; but it is above all when we are hearing Mass that we should conceive this holy desire; for, whilst the priest offers the great sacrifice in thanksgiving for all God's mercies, in atonement for the sins of all men, living and dead, to draw down new blessings, especially on those there present, and to give supreme glory to God, we can each of us do all this with him. In the same way, when he bends down to receive the sacred host and afterwards drinks of the chalice, we, too, can partake in spirit of the divine Victim and so draw life and strength into our souls.

At the same time we ought, in response to the wish of the Holy Father, to make our sacramental communions more frequent than they were of old, remembering that nothing is required for a good communion but a right intention and freedom from

mortal sin. Communion is not a reward for holiness but a means for attaining holiness, the best means of all. It is a medicine for every sickness of the soul, and Christ, our physician, wishes to give it us: "Come unto Me, all you that labor, and are burdened, and I will refresh you" (*Matt.* xi. 28).

MEDITATION XXXII

PURGATORY

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

THE object of this meditation, the last of the *Purgative Way*, is to excite in us a desire to make satisfaction for past sin and at the same time to help with our prayers the suffering souls in purgatory, with whom we shall some day be numbered.

History.—"It is therefore a holy, and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins" (2 *Mach.* xii. 46). Men, as a rule, when they die, are not fit to go straight into the presence of the all-holy God. Common sense, as well as Scripture and tradition, tells us that there must be a purgatory.

Mental Picture.—A land of sadness and suffering where the souls of the just are cleansed from their sins.

Petition.—Grace to satisfy God's justice in this life, that so my purgatory may be shortened.

FIRST POINT.—The guilt of sin must be forgiven before we pass out of this world; yet even then its debt remains upon the soul. This debt must be cleared off before we can find admittance into the heavenly city; for it is written: "There shall not enter into it any thing defiled" (*Apoc.* xxi. 27). Now the sufferings of this life borne humbly and patiently, as also punishments voluntarily inflicted on ourselves, are accepted by God in atonement for sin. They are also meritorious, whereas the pains of purgatory are not. How much better, then, to clear off our debt now, seeing that we can do it at far less cost to ourselves and at the same time increase our eternal reward!

SECOND POINT.—We call the souls in purgatory the *Poor Souls*. They are in truth very much to be pitied, and that for three reasons:

1. Because they are *suffering*. What their sufferings are we do not know; but the mere fact of their being shut out of heaven is enough. They realize now, as they never did before, the blessedness of possessing God, and, as they can not attain it, they have to endure the bitterness of "hope deferred that afflicteth the soul" (*Prov.* xiii. 12).

2. Because they are *helpless*. They can do nothing to shorten their banishment nor to ease their pain; for that they depend entirely on our charity.

3. Because they are often *forgotten*. “Out of sight out of mind.” Even their dearest friends think of them only occasionally; and some, were it not for the prayers of the Church for all her dead, would not be thought of at all.

Let us resolve, then, to pray often for the dead, above all for those who have any special claim upon us and for those who are most forgotten. This is a great act of mercy which draws down God’s mercy on us and earns the gratitude of the Poor Souls themselves, who will pray in return for those that help them, and, when they get to heaven, will not be like Pharaoh’s cup-bearer, who forgot Joseph.

THIRD POINT.—We also call them the *Holy Souls*, and holy indeed they are.

1. Because they are *confirmed in grace*. What a joy it must be amid their sufferings to know that they can never again fall away from God!

2. Because they are free from all affection to sin and everything that leads to it. Sin is now the one thing they hate; its cruel consequences still clinging to them are a source of intense loathing and anguish.

3. They love God with a perfect love, with their whole heart, with their whole soul, with their whole mind, with their whole strength; and they are unspeakably dear to Him.

So, whereas in Hell there is neither joy nor love

nor hope, in purgatory we find all three, mingled nevertheless with heart-breaking sorrow, which love and longing only increase. It will be well for us if we learn to love God now; for love will teach us to do penance for our offences against Him, and then we shall not have for such a weary while to lament: "Woe is me, that my sojourning is prolonged!" (*Ps. cxix. 5*).

Colloquy with the Holy Souls. De Profundis, page 382.

PART II

THE ILLUMINATIVE WAY

INTRODUCTION

THE Illuminative Way, as we have said above, leads us through the Infancy, Public Life, and Passion of Christ our Lord, setting before us for our imitation the example of Him who is the Light of the world, "the true light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world" (*John* i. 9).

The meditations will be divided into points according to the sequence of events; but under each point it is of service to consider the persons who appear before us, the words they utter and the actions they perform.

The Thirty Years

MEDITATION I

THE FOUNDATION OF THE ILLUMINATIVE WAY

THE CALL OF THE KING

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—The great King calls all men to follow Him.

Mental Picture.—The Holy Places where our Saviour lived and died—Bethlehem, Nazareth, the Lake of Galilee, Calvary.

Petition.—Not to be deaf to His call, but ready and eager to do His holy bidding.

FIRST POINT.—A parable.—Once on a time, says St. Ignatius, a great king, specially chosen by God and revered by the whole of Christendom, resolved to go on a crusade to recover the holy places in Palestine from the hands of the infidels. He summoned all his faithful subjects to follow him, promising that he would share himself in every hardship and every danger. He would march among his men like a common soldier, watch at night with them, and lead them in person to battle; and every man that fought bravely at his side should share, he said, in his certain triumph.¹

No leader since the world began has ever offered terms like these. St. Louis of France was something like the king of this story. He was brave, gentle, holy, and intensely beloved; but he did not march with the rank and file, and he could not promise victory. It is, therefore, nothing but a

¹ A crusade was preached in Spain and other countries when St. Ignatius was a lad. Like all the efforts made by the Popes of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries on behalf of the Holy Places it came to nothing; but if, as is not unlikely, Ignatius had longed to take part in it, this may account for the dramatic cast of this meditation and also for the saint's earnest desire, afterward carried out, to go on pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

beautiful fable. Yet what would the subjects of such a king say in response to so generous an offer? Would they not all eagerly gather round his standard? If any man refused to follow him would not the whole world brand him as a caitiff knight?

SECOND POINT.—Apply this parable to Christ our Lord; then it is no longer a parable but the truth. Christ is a king, indeed! (1) by inheritance; for He is the Son of God, the King of kings; (2) by conquest; for He has overcome the wicked tyrant who had usurped His throne: (3) by nature; because He has all the qualities that befit a king, wisdom and power and justice and mercy. He is every inch a king.

He, too, has taken the cross; but it is not sewn upon His garment as a sign; it rests its heavy weight upon His shoulder as He goes to be crucified upon it. And He calls us all to follow Him, saying: “It is My will to subdue the whole world, to humble all the enemies of God and man, and so to enter into the glory of My Father. He, then, that would come after Me must take up his cross and follow Me, that sharing in My labors and sufferings, as I share in his, he may have part with Me in the eternal victory.”

Compare this great reality with the fable, point by point. Compare king with king, cause with

cause, foe with foe, battle with battle, victory with victory, triumph with triumph. You will never have to face any toil or hardship which your eternal King has not gone through before you. He always leads the way. "See My hands and feet," He says; "for you I was scourged and mocked and crucified. Follow Me."

THIRD POINT.—"The man that will not follow such a leader," says St. Ignatius, "has no common sense"; yet, sad to say, many turn a deaf ear to His call, many more are cold and half-hearted; few, very few throw themselves into His cause with all their hearts. What do I mean to do?

Colloquy with Jesus Christ, my King. O Deus, Ego Amo Te, page 385.

MEDITATION II

THE INCARNATION

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—The three divine Persons, seeing the whole surface of the earth covered with wretched and perishing human beings, decree that God the Son shall take flesh for their salvation, and when the fulness of time has come send the angel Gabriel to our blessed Lady.

Mental Picture.—Cast your eyes over the earth

peopled by so many different races, and then fix them on Joachim's house at Nazareth, where our Lady is waiting in prayer.

Petition.—To know my incarnate God better, that, knowing Him, I may love and follow Him.

FIRST POINT.—What is it that moves God to show this wondrous mercy?

1. Man is God's creature, bearing His own image and likeness.

2. Man is unspeakably wretched, and, being once fallen, can never rise again of himself.

3. His ruin was brought about by the deceit of the devil. No such plea could be urged for the rebel angels; for, on the one hand, they had a far clearer knowledge of God's holiness and beauty and, on the other, there was none to tempt them from their allegiance.

4. Original sin, with all its fearful consequences, has been transmitted as an inheritance to all the children of Adam and Eve; so that they are not themselves accountable for it. "For behold, I was conceived in iniquities and in sins did my mother conceive me" (*Ps.* l. 7).

Therefore in the very act of fulminating the dreadful curse which that sin brought down upon our race the good God promised a Redeemer: "I will put enmities, etc." (*Gen.* iii. 15.) Thus man's ingratitude has brought God's mercy to light. But for sin the divine compassion would

never have been known to us. "The mercies of the Lord I will sing forever" (*Ps. lxxxviii. 1*). "Because with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him plentiful redemption, and He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities" (*Ps. cxxix. 7, 8*).

SECOND POINT.—Why has God chosen to redeem man in this way?

1. He might of course have condoned the offence without requiring any adequate satisfaction; but, while that would have manifested His mercy indeed, neither His wisdom, His justice, His holiness, nor His mercy itself would have shone forth as they do in the great mystery of the Incarnation.

2. It was man who had sinned; therefore man ought to atone; but the sin, by reason of the infinite majesty offended, was itself infinite; therefore it demanded an infinite atonement, and, man being finite, such an atonement was out of his reach. But, if God became man, then, as man, He could atone for His fellow men, and His atonement, inasmuch as He was also God, would be of infinite value.

3. Man had been guilty of pride in wishing to become as God; so God would "empty Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men and in habit found as a man" (*Philipp. ii. 7*).

4. Man had been guilty of disobedience; so God

would "humble Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross" (*Philipp.* ii. 8).

Have we not reason to bless and praise our good God for this most merciful invention of His love?

THIRD POINT.—Look once more on the human race as it was when the Son of God came on earth. You see all kinds of diversities. Some are white, others black, yellow, brown, copper-colored. Some are at peace, others at war. Some are weeping, others laughing. Some are healthy, others sick. Some are being born, others are dying.

And what are they talking of? Everything that is evil, little that is clean and good. And what are they doing? Striking and killing, cheating and corrupting each other, and going down into hell.

Who would ever imagine this depraved race to be the children of the first man and woman with whom God walked in Eden, so innocent, so beautiful, so perfectly happy? Or who would ever dream that they were created to praise, reverence, and serve God, and by so doing to save their souls?

Then look up to heaven and think of God infinitely happy in eternal peace, as undisturbed by this chaos of trouble and contention as you when you stop to watch the May-flies swarming over a brook at evening. But more than that; here is

man, weak, ignorant, helpless, wholly dependent on the mercy of this great God to whom he owes his very being, yet utterly unmindful of Him; and God, though He needs not man, thinking of him, pitying him, planning his redemption from the woes his own crimes have brought upon him. "The fulness of time has come," He says, "let us redeem this fallen race."

Lastly, turn your gaze once more on Mary. Listen to the words of the angel and watch the holy Virgin humbling herself and giving thanks.

Colloquy with her and with God the Son incarnate within her. The *Angelus*, page 393.

MEDITATION III

THE WORLD REDEEMED

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—It is now nearly two thousand years since God came down on earth. All that long time His Church has been proclaiming the good tidings, with wonderful results, indeed, among those who have listened to her message; yet the world at large remains unmoved and unchanged.

Mental Picture.—Cast your eyes over the earth as it is in this twentieth century.

Petition.—Zeal for the salvation of perishing mankind.

FIRST POINT.—The persons.—Among men we find the same diversities of race and custom, peace and war, laughter and tears, life and death, and the same steady drift toward hell. God is still looking down upon them with infinite compassion. The holy Virgin is no longer on earth with one angel saluting her, but in heaven, surrounded by all the angelic choirs, whose queen she is.

SECOND POINT.—Their words.—“Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh,” and the hearts of men are as corrupt as ever; so their talk is no better than of old. God is still saying: “Let us go on redeeming this unhappy race”; for “charity hopeth all things, endureth all things” (1 *Cor.* xiii. 7). Gabriel two thousand years ago was saying the first Hail Mary; now God’s Church is ringing the changes on it all the world over. “From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same” the Angelus peals out from every belfry as the day wears on, morn, noon, and night summoning the whole of Catholic Christendom to commemorate the blessed mystery of Redemption.

THIRD POINT.—Their actions.—Men still strike and kill as of old, but with a difference; for in bygone times they met in the heat of the fray and hammered lustily at each other with sword and battle axe; whereas now they deal out death in cold blood a mile away, or with scientific precision go deliberately to work with Maxim-guns or tor-

pedoes to sweep Humanity off the face of God's earth. It has been seriously proposed to destroy a whole army at once by means of shells filled with poisonous gases. And, though slavery has been nominally abolished. What about the white slave traffic? What about the sweating system? What of the relation between master and man, between the employer and those whom he calls his "hands," as if immortal men were but pieces of machinery?

God of yore became man to save men; now He invites other men to help Him in His crusade against His foes and ours. It is the call of the great King.

The holy Virgin was then humbling herself and giving thanks as the Son of God took flesh within her; now the Incarnation is a great living fact, perpetuated throughout the ages in every Mass offered on earth; but oh, how sad to think what little use the world makes of it!

Colloquy with Jesus on the altar and with His immaculate Mother. *Alma Redemptoris*, page 375.

MEDITATION IV

THE INCARNATION A WORK OF LOVE

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—"God so loved the world as to give

His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting" (*John* iii. 16).

Mental Picture.—The house of our Lady's parents, where she is in prayer.

Petition.—Grace to understand God's love and respond to it.

FIRST POINT.—Who is this Lover, and what is the world He loves? It is God who loves, God, who is infinitely blessed and needs nothing to complete His happiness; and by the world are meant the sinful men who people the world. "God commendeth His charity towards us, because when as yet we were sinners according to the time Christ died for us" (*Rom.* v. 8). Alas! all the love is on one side; for men are such clods that they neither return God's love nor even acknowledge it. Is not this my case, too? Oh, let me be ashamed of my base ingratitude.

SECOND POINT.—What sort of love is this? How are we to measure it? Well, love is shown by deeds rather than by words. The more we love the more we give; and what has God given? His only begotten Son. "That was the true light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world; and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not" (*John* i. 9).

O my soul, will you not love Him who loves you

so well, and that “not in word nor in tongue, but in deed and in truth?” (1 *John* iii. 18).

THIRD POINT.—Why does God love, and why does He give His only begotten Son? “That whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting.” *Whosoever*—Therefore none are excluded: “Behold,” said the angel to the shepherds, “I bring you good tidings of great joy that shall be to *all* the people” (*Luke* ii. 10). *Believeth*, that is, with a living faith, showing itself in good works. *May not perish*: may not fall a prey to the evil one and by sin, which is the death of the soul, perish eternally. *But may have life everlasting*: God, then, has given me His only begotten Son that He may be able to give me also the happiness of heaven. Was there ever such a love as this? Can I remain cold and frozen before such a glowing furnace?

Colloquy with our Lady and the incarnate Word.
The *Angelus*, page 393.

MEDITATION V

THE ELECTION AND CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—Mary was chosen from eternity to be the Mother of God and was therefore preserved from original sin.

Mental Picture.—"A great sign appeared in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet and on her head a crown of twelve stars" (*Apoc.* xii. 1).

Petition.—"Turn then, most gracious advocate, thine eyes of mercy towards us."

FIRST POINT.—Christ was born of a woman.—
1. That as a descendant of Adam and Eve He might atone for the sins of the human race.

2. "Because," says St. Bernard, "as one man and one woman brought about our ruin, it was fitting that another man and another woman should restore us to God's favor."

3. That He might be "in all things like as we are without sin" (*Heb.* iv. 15).

4. That as He makes us the children of His Father, being "the first-born amongst many brethren" (*Rom.* viii. 29), so His Mother also might be a mother to us.

5. That He might be a model to every age from childhood upward. Having chosen Mary for His mother He adorned her for His own sake with every grace. Let us rejoice with her, because He that is mighty hath done great things to her.

SECOND POINT.—Mary is the daughter of God the Father, the mother of God the Son, the bride of God the Holy Ghost, and therefore immaculate. "Who is this that cometh up as the morning rising, fair as the moon, bright as the sun?" (*Cant.*

vi. 9.) Whatever she has she owes to God's bounty. She is "as a bride adorned with her jewels" (*Is.* lxi. 10); but all of His giving. She is redeemed by the blood of Christ, as we are, but in a more wonderful way; for, while we are snatched as brands from the burning, the flames are not suffered to come nigh her. "Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is not a spot in thee" (*Cant.* iv. 7).

THIRD POINT.—Being without sin, she is freed from concupiscence, which is the fruit of sin. All her attractions are to what is good and holy; her heart turns to God as the flower to the sun.

She is, moreover, confirmed in grace, her will being in such perfect accord with the divine Will that it is morally impossible she should set herself in opposition to it by the slightest infidelity.

Lastly, she is "full of grace," and if full even now at the moment of her conception what will she be when she leaves earth for heaven? Full to overflowing; and her overflow, says St. Bernard, is for us.

"Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it. Except the Lord keep the city, he watcheth in vain that keepeth it. It is vain for you to rise before light: rise ye after you have sitten, you that eat the bread of sorrow" (*Ps.* cxxvi. 1, 2).

Mary's immaculate holiness is of the Lord's

building; the citadel of her pure soul has been always in His keeping. She alone has risen before light, for she is the morning star that heralds the eternal day of Redemption. The morning star has no light of its own, but reflects that of the sun while he is still below the horizon, and so does Mary owe everything to Jesus Christ. As for us, conceived as we were in sin, we can rise only when Christ, "The Orient from on high," rises upon us, and when by repentance we have eaten our fill of the bread of sorrow. Morning Star, pray for us.

Colloquy with our Lady. The *Magnificat*, page 381.

MEDITATION VI

OUR LADY'S BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—St. Joachim and St. Anna, our Lady's parents, were looking "for the redemption of Israel." This blessed child was the reward of their prayers and desires.

Mental Picture.—The child Mary standing at her mother's knee.

Petition.—Grace to devote my life to God's service.

- *FIRST POINT*.—Her birth brought joy to heaven and earth.—When God in the beginning made land

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and sea, sun, moon, and stars, He "saw that they were good," that is, He was pleased with His work. What delight, then, He must find in this beautiful creature! The angels, too, are filled with joy; the blessed spirits in Limbo and all just men on earth who look for the coming of the Redeemer, though maybe they do not know the reason, are flooded with strange consolation. Have not I good cause to rejoice with them? That Joachim and Anna were great saints is a logical deduction from the fact that they were chosen to beget the Mother of God. No doubt, they had once longed and earnestly prayed for a child; yet their prayer seemed to be unheard. God was waiting till old age should extinguish concupiscence, till their personal holiness should be perfected, and the natural wish for an offspring should have given way to the one burning desire for the coming of the Messiah.

SECOND POINT.—Tradition says that Mary, when three years old, was brought to the Temple and there offered up by her parents, like Samuel, to the service of God, and then the holy child danced for joy on the Temple steps: "I rejoiced at the things that were said to me; we shall go into the house of the Lord" (*Ps. cxxi. 1*). There her days were spent in prayer and the study of the Law and the Prophets, and in earnest longing for the coming of the Messiah. How often and how fervently

did she repeat those words of her ancestor, King David: "Stir up Thy might, and come to save us" (*Ps.* lxxix. 3); and those of Isaias: "Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain the just; let the earth be opened, and bud forth a Saviour!" (*Is.* xlv. 8).

THIRD POINT.—That she vowed her virginity to God is evident from her words to the angel Gabriel; yet it was God's will that she should take a husband: (1) that her good name might be shielded from slander; (2) that the Incarnation might be concealed from the devil; (3) that in Joseph, Mary, and Jesus the world might have a model of family life.

Colloquy with our Lady. The *Magnificat*, page 381.

MEDITATION VII

THE ANNUNCIATION—I

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—"The angel of the Lord brought word unto Mary, and she conceived by the Holy Ghost."

Mental Picture.—Gabriel saluting our Lady.

Petition.—Something of her purity and humility.

FIRST POINT.—The angel was sent *from God*. This wonderful message, then, was the message of the Creator to His own creature. What must she

have been! The messenger was the archangel *Gabriel*, his name meaning the “Strength of God”; for he came to announce what might well seem impossible; but to the Almighty “all things are possible.” “Into a city of Galilee called *Nazareth*,” a little hamlet quite unknown to the rest of the world. “To a *virgin* espoused to a man named Joseph”; to a carpenter’s wife, who had vowed virginity. And what was the angel’s message? That she was to be the Mother of God.

SECOND POINT.—“And the angel, being come in, said unto her: Hail, full of grace!” “*Full of grace*” is the name he gives her. She is known on earth as “Mary,” but in heaven as “Full of grace.” “*The Lord is with thee*,” as He never was with any other, not even the princes of the angelic choirs. “*Blessed art thou among women*,” blessed and a source of blessing.

THIRD POINT.—“Who, having heard, *was troubled* at his saying, and *thought with herself* what manner of salutation this should be.” What humility! Such words of praise caused her nothing but trouble. And what prudence! She thought with herself. Oh! if Eve had only thought like this what manner of salutation it was she heard! “And the angel said to her: *Fear not, Mary*.” He calls her now by her earthly name, to give her confidence. “For thou hast found *grace with God*.” Grace with God! Ah, that is

what we all want! Give me Thy grace, O Lord, and that is enough for me.

Colloquy with our Lady. Alma Redemptoris, page 375.

MEDITATION VIII

THE ANNUNCIATION—II

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History, etc., as above.

FIRST POINT.—“Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb and shalt bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name *Jesus*,” that is, *Saviour*. “And He shall be *great*,” filled with Heaven’s best gifts, to act as mediator between God and man. “And He shall be called the *Son of the Most High*”; called so because He is so, not by adoption, but by nature. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (*John* i. 1). “And the Lord God shall give unto Him the *throne of David*, His father,” a throne whereof that was a type, the kingship over the new Jerusalem. “And He shall reign in the *house of Jacob* forever”; the true Israel, the Church on earth and in heaven. This is the “stone cut out of a mountain without hands, which became a great mountain and filled the whole earth” (*Dan.* ii. 34). “The Lord will send forth

the scepter of Thy power out of Sion; rule Thou in the midst of Thy enemies. With Thee is the principality in the day of Thy strength, in the brightness of the saints; from the womb, before the day-star, I begot Thee" (*Ps. cix. 2*).

SECOND POINT.—"And Mary said to the angel: How shall this be done, because *I know not man?*" How brightly in this reply shines out that holy maiden's love of chastity! Oh, that I felt something of her jealous care on this score! Then should I never, on the plea of good fellowship or of doing good to others, heedlessly expose my own soul to danger. She does not yet understand the angel's message. Does it mean that, like Anna, she is to become the mother of a great prophet? Yet how shall this come to pass, seeing that she has vowed her virginity to God? Isaias, it is true, has foretold that the Messiah shall be born of a virgin; but her humility forbids her to think that that virgin may be herself. Then how prudent, how self-possessed she is! God's messenger has to speak twice before she answers him, and then how modestly, how humbly, and in how few words!

THIRD POINT.—"The *Holy Ghost* shall come upon thee." Full of grace already, the Holy Ghost shall now fill thee to overflowing. "The power of the *Most High* shall overshadow thee," and, maiden as thou art, thou shalt bear a child, being a maiden still. "Therefore also the Holy

which shall be born of thee shall be called the *Son of God*''; for He shall have not man, but God for His father. We see here that the Incarnation is the work of the adorable Trinity, the Most High, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. "And behold, thy cousin Elizabeth, she also hath conceived a son in her old age, because no word shall be impossible with God." When God makes a revelation He is wont to witness to its truth by a sign. This may be a chastisement for want of faith, as in the case of Zachary, who was struck dumb for a while; but Mary's faith is full and perfect, so the sign given to her takes the form of a great family blessing—her aged cousin has conceived.

Now at last the angel's meaning is clear, and Mary knows that she is the chosen Mother of the Messiah. In profound humility, in sublime thanksgiving she pours out her soul before her God, blessing Him for His mercy to her people and to the whole human race, blessing him for this stupendous favor conferred upon herself. Gabriel has given his message and now waits for the holy Virgin's reply. And we men are waiting also in breathless suspense. What will she say? If she consents our redemption is at hand; if she refuses we are lost for ever. *Colloquy with our Lady.* The *Angelus*, page 393.

MEDITATION IX

THE DIVINE CONCEPTION

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History and Mental Picture as in Meditation VII.

Petition.—Deep thankfulness to the incarnate God and His Mother.

FIRST POINT.—Mary's consent. The angel has just told her that she is to be God's Mother. She answers: "Behold the *handmaid* of the Lord." And again in her hymn of praise: "He hath regarded the humility of His *handmaid*." Evidently she was wont to pray—was perhaps actually praying when the angel came to her that she might be a little servant to wait on the blessed woman of whom her God was to take flesh. "*Be it done to me according to thy word*." What perfect conformity to God's will! She knew from the prophecy of Isaias that great sorrows were in store for her as mother of "the Man of Sorrows"; yet for God's glory and our salvation she accepts them willingly. Ah, how great a debt of gratitude we owe her for this consent! How shall we ever repay it? Surely it is impossible to love her too much.

SECOND POINT.—"The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us" (*John* i. 14). At that same mo-

ment the Holy Spirit came down upon her and the power of the Most High overshadowed her, and out of her pure flesh and blood was fashioned that sacred manhood which the Eternal Word thereupon took up and made His own, while the adorable Trinity rejoiced in the mercy poured out on men, the angels sang songs of praise, and all the earth was made glad: "Let the sea be moved and the fulness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein. The rivers shall clap their hands; the mountains shall rejoice together at the presence of the Lord, because He cometh to judge the earth" (*Ps. xcvii. 7-9*).

And have not we children of Adam good reason to be glad? Was it not "for us men and for our salvation He came down from heaven and took flesh of the Virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Ghost?"

THIRD POINT.—Our Saviour need not have taken a mortal body. Death is the penalty of sin, and He was sinless. His blessed soul enjoyed the vision of God, and that vision should have glorified His body, as it did for a short time on Thabor; but, having taken our sins upon Himself, He would take also the penalty of our sins and would suffer and die like the rest of mankind.

Neither need He have taken the form of an infant; but He chose to be like His brethren in all things. To win their love and teach them humil-

ity—that was His object; so He would pass through all the weaknesses and sufferings of childhood, and that, not as other children do, but with full consciousness of all that He endured.

Colloquy with the Holy Child and His Mother. Alma Redemptoris, page 375.

MEDITATION X

THE VISITATION

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—Mary goes into the mountains to visit Elizabeth and in reply to her blessing breaks out into a hymn of praise to God.

Mental Picture.—The meeting of the two cousins.

Petition.—That Mary may bring her child to visit me.

FIRST POINT.—It was Christ that impelled His Mother to undertake this journey, so eager was He to sanctify His forerunner John, and, though this could have been done without His going to John in person, it was His will that Mary should begin at once to be the instrument of His mercies to men. At the sound of her voice the Precursor should be cleansed from sin. She, on her part, bearing God within her, is filled with the spirit of charity; so, rising up, she goes “with haste.”

SECOND POINT.—Mary salutes Elizabeth, and at the sound of her greeting the child leaps in his mother's womb, leaps for joy at the presence of his Redeemer; and in truth he has good reason for joy, being freed from sin before his birth. Elizabeth, too, is filled with the Holy Ghost and cries out "with a loud voice," saying: "Blessed art thou among women"—the very words of Gabriel—"and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" Elizabeth is the first of human kind to proclaim our Lady as the Mother of God.

THIRD POINT.—"And blessed art thou that hast believed," etc. The holy Virgin, hearing herself twice called blessed, breaks out at once into a hymn of praise to God. Is this my way? When I find myself honored and made much of do I straightway give all the glory to God? "Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to Thy Name give glory" (*Ps. cxiii*).

Colloquy with Our Lady. Alma Redemptoris,
page 375.

MEDITATION XI

THE MAGNIFICAT

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—Mary gives praise to God.

Mental Picture.—The holy Virgin rapt in spirit.

Petition.—Grace to praise God with heart and tongue.

FIRST POINT.—“My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God, my Saviour.” She does not glorify herself, but God; and first she praises Him as the Lord of all things, then as God, her Creator, and lastly as her Saviour, rejoicing in Him rather than in His gifts to herself.

“Because He hath regarded the humility of His handmaid,” that is, her lowliness, her littleness; for “Who is as the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high and looketh down on the low things in heaven and earth, raising up the needy from the earth and lifting up the poor out of the dunghill?” (*Ps. cxii. 5-7.*)

SECOND POINT.—“For behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.” This thought fills her heart with joy, not for her own sake, but by reason of the glory that will come to God and the graces that will be poured down on men through their reverence for the Mother of their Redeemer. Heretics may call her Mary or the Virgin; the Catholic Church has always known her as the Blessed Virgin Mary. This is one of the many subsidiary marks of the True Church, and should make us doubly glad to help in the fulfilment of this prophecy by invoking her as blessed. Blessed she is and to all generations a source of blessings.

“Because He that is mighty hath done great things to me, and holy is His name.” What are these great things? 1. She is God’s Mother. 2. She is His virgin Mother. 3. She is His sinless Mother. 4. She is full of grace. All these marvelous privileges she attributes to the mightiness and holiness of God, to Him “who alone doth wonderful things” (*Ps.* lxxi. 18); and, with the blessed in heaven, she sings: “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God almighty” (*Apoc.* iv. 8).

THIRD POINT.—“And His mercy is from generation unto generation to them that fear Him.” So far she has been praising God for what He has done for her alone; now she begins to recount His mercies to all mankind. In her Son “shall all the nations of the earth be blessed” (*Gen.* xviii. 18). To the end of time, as from its beginning, God will pour forth His mercies upon the children of men for the sake of Him whom she bears within her.

“He hath showed might in His arm.” Her father David calls the heavens “the work of God’s fingers” (*Ps.* viii. 4). The Incarnation is the work of His arm; for it is more admirable than the creation of all things visible and invisible.

“He hath scattered the proud in the conceit of their heart”; Lucifer, that is, and all who, like him, lift themselves up against God; for He has brought their pride to naught through the humiliations of His Son.

“He hath put down the mighty from their seat and hath exalted the humble.” Already, by the mouth of His blessed Mother, our Saviour is publishing the great law of His kingdom: “Every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted” (*Luke* xiv. 11).

“He hath filled the hungry with good things and the rich He hath sent empty away.” This again anticipates the teaching of the Sermon on the Plain: “Blessed are ye that hunger now, for you shall be filled. Woe to you that are filled, for you shall hunger” (*Luke* vi. 21, 25).

“He hath received Israel, His servant, being mindful of His mercy, as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever.” God’s mercy endureth forever (*Ps.* cv. 1), and He is eternally faithful to His promises; wherefore, though He may seem to forget us for a time, we may trust Him with confidence; all which is shown forth in the great mystery now accomplished. It had been foretold so many centuries ago; but the sin and ingratitude of men had delayed it. At last the fulness of time has come; the Redeemer is on earth.

Colloquy with Our Lady. Hail, Mary.

MEDITATION XII

THE BIRTH OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—John's birth is foretold by the angel Gabriel, his father Zachary being struck dumb for his want of faith. When the child is born Zachary's speech is restored and he sings the praises of God and His Christ in the canticle "*Benedictus*."

Mental Picture.—The old man holding the child in his arms.

Petition.—A deep sense of the mercy shown to us in the Incarnation of the Son of God.

FIRST POINT.—Our blessed Lady remained in the house of Zachary all this time; and if the Ark brought such blessings on the house of Obededom (2 *Kings* vi.) what copious graces must the presence of the holy Virgin and her child have conferred on that privileged family! By devotion to our Lady and the Blessed Eucharist we may all share in these blessings.

SECOND POINT.—The child is born; his father gives him the name John, a new name in that family, meaning "*the grace of God*," and then Zachary recovers his speech. The first use he makes of it is to praise God for having visited and wrought the redemption of His people, according to the

promises made to Abraham and David and in fulfilment of all the prophecies from the beginning, giving them deliverance from all their enemies, that they may serve Him without fear, in holiness and justice before Him all their days.

THIRD POINT.—Then he speaks to the new-born child, declaring that he shall be called the prophet of the Most High and go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways, to enlighten them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to direct their feet into the way of peace. Our forefathers were among those who sat in darkness and in the shadow of death; but “the people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; to them that dwelt in the region of the shadow of death light is risen” (*Is. ix. 2*). Is it not fitting, then, that, being so mercifully redeemed from sin and death, we, too, should serve God in holiness and justice before Him all our days?

Colloquy with our Redeemer. Benedictus, page 405, or Te Deum, page 399.

MEDITATION XIII

ST. JOSEPH'S TRIAL

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—Joseph, being a just man and not yet understanding the great mystery, was minded pri-

vately to put away his newly-wedded wife; but while he thought on these things an angel appeared to him (*Matt. i. 19*).

Mental Picture.—Joseph working at his bench, his heart full of care.

Petition.—Grace never to act on impulse; but in every doubt and trouble to seek light and comfort from God.

FIRST POINT.—To Elizabeth and Zachary the great mystery had been revealed, but not to Joseph. Consequently, when he became aware that our Lady was with child he was in deep distress; but he was a just—that is a holy, man—no doubt it was Mary who bore this witness to him—and, being in a dilemma between the obvious fact and the young mother's obvious innocence, he thought to put her away secretly. It may be, indeed, that he began to suspect what had happened and was filled with awe at finding himself the husband of this chosen soul. Thus it is that God tries His elect. We may learn from St. Joseph to judge others kindly, always to make excuses for them, seeing how easily the best and holiest may be misunderstood. Our Lady, too, must have suffered intensely; yet she says not a word in her own defence, but leaves her reputation in God's hands. Is this what I do?

SECOND POINT.—An angel is sent to comfort Joseph and explain everything. "Joseph, son of

David," he says, reminding him that Mary also is a descendant of David, to whom the great promise was made, "fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost; and she shall bring forth a son, and thou," as his foster-father, "shalt call his name Jesus." So in all my doubts and difficulties and whenever I have a misunderstanding with my friends I will cast myself down before God and ask His help, trusting Him to set everything straight.

THIRD POINT.—"And Joseph, rising up from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him, and took unto him his wife." How great was the joy of both, and what reverence Joseph now felt for the holy Virgin! Holy as he was before, how he grew in holiness through living under the same roof with her and her divine child!

Colloquy with St. Joseph. O Holy Joseph, page 386.

MEDITATION XIV

OUR LADY'S EXPECTATION

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—For nine months the Blessed Mother was looking forward to the birth of her Saviour.

Mental Picture.—See her kneeling in prayer.

Petition.—Some share in her holy desire.

FIRST POINT.—Few on earth beside the holy Virgin know anything of her great secret; her whole being is absorbed in it. Whether she spins or prays or goes about her household duties she is thinking ever of her God made man; her whole soul is centered in Him, and she has Him all to herself. Yet how she longs for the hour when she may look upon His face, hear His voice, meet His lips with hers, wait upon Him, nurse Him on her bosom, repaying in a thousand tender ways the love He has shown in choosing her for His mother! Do I feel anything of that burning desire to receive my Lord in holy communion? Let me beg our Lady for some little share in her tender love of Jesus.

SECOND POINT.—She longs for His birth also that she may make Him known to others, offer Him for their veneration, and rejoice in the triumphs of His love. Am I on fire to make my Saviour known and loved by other men? I am keen enough about other things; but is the glory of God and His Christ anything like a passion with me? Let me ask blessed Mary to give me something of her zeal to spread the blessings of the Incarnation.

THIRD POINT.—Even now, as she moves about among her fellow villagers, carrying her divine babe within her, she sheds grace and joy on every side. “Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with thee.”

Do I carry Christ about with me? Can I say

with St. Paul: "Now thanks be to God, who always maketh us to triumph in Christ Jesus, and manifesteth the odor of His knowledge by us in every place; for we are the good odor of Christ unto God in them that are saved" (2 *Cor.* ii. 14).

Colloquy to our blessed Lady. *Alma Redemptoris*, page 375.

MEDITATION XV

THE JOURNEY TO BETHLEHEM

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—"And all went to be enrolled, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, to be enrolled with Mary his espoused wife who was with child" (*Luke* ii. 3).

Mental Picture.—Our Lady seated on an ass, St. Joseph leading it.

Petition.—Grace to know our Saviour better, that I may love Him more fervently and follow Him more faithfully.

FIRST POINT.—Cæsar's decree inflicted great suffering on the poor. They had to travel long distances and to incur heavy expense with no advantage to themselves. Nowadays a census is taken in

a very different fashion. We may be sure there was plenty of grumbling and cursing at the Roman emperor's heartless cruelty; but we find nothing of that sort here. Mary and Joseph in this decree see only the will of God. They know that Christ is to be born in Bethlehem; yet, though the young mother's time is close at hand, they have left it all to Him, and are now filled with admiration at the way in which the prophet's word is about to be accomplished. I will learn from them to leave myself in the hands of my heavenly Father. His will often involves heavy sacrifices; but the joy of it is that it is His will.

SECOND POINT.—Watch them on their journey. They say little; for the thoughts of both are occupied with the great mystery in which they are taking part. With what reverence Joseph treats the holy Virgin, and what delicate consideration she shows for him! It was a long journey of some seventy-five miles and must have taken three or four days at least; and all this weary travel had but one object, that the Son of God might be born in utter poverty, and, after so many labors and sufferings, might die on the cross for me. Ought not I, then, to be willing to take some trouble in His service?

THIRD POINT.—When they reach the end of their journey the inn is full, or, at any rate, there is no room for such poor folk as they are; so they take

shelter in a stable. "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not" (*John* i. 11). "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head" (*Luke* ix. 58). "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel hath not known Me, and My people hath not understood" (*Is.* i. 3).

And shall I sit in the inn and make merry while my God and His virgin Mother are turned away from the door?

Colloquy with our Lady. *Alma Redemptoris*, page 375.

MEDITATION XVI

THE BIRTH OF CHRIST

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—"And she brought forth her first-born Son and wrapped Him up in swaddling-clothes and laid Him in a manger" (*Luke* ii, 7).

Mental Picture.—Your favorite treatment of the subject.

Petition.—To know, love, and follow your new-born Saviour.

FIRST POINT.—In an ecstasy of prayer and without any of the pains of childbirth the holy Virgin brings forth her Son, lifts Him up in her arms, and

with adoring love embraces Him. Then taking Him in her lap she wraps Him in swaddling-clothes and lays Him in the manger between the ox and the ass. What a cradle this for the King of kings! "The Lord God shall give Him the throne of David His father," said Gabriel. Is this His throne?

O my Saviour, Thou art teaching Thy first lesson, a lesson in poverty. The comforts of the poor cottage at Nazareth are too good for thee. Thou must be born, like a beggar's child, on the roadside!

SECOND POINT.—Then, kneeling by the crib, the holy Virgin adores her divine Child, thanks Him for choosing her as His mother, thanks Him for saving her from original sin, thanks Him for preserving her maidenhood. How brimful of holy rapture is her pure heart! Our joys are commonly greater in anticipation than in reality. It was not so with Mary; though she had looked forward to this hour with such intense longing, it was sweeter when it came than she had ever dreamed it could be. And Joseph is at her side, sharing in her joy, thanking the newborn babe for all He has done for him.

Let me join in their thanksgiving. How much I owe to the Babe of Bethlehem!

THIRD POINT.—And what is that divine Child doing? He, too, is giving thanks to His eternal Father and offering Himself up for His glory and

the salvation of the world. "In the head of the book it is written of Me that I should do Thy will" (Ps. xxxix. 8). He cries like other children; but it is not like other children that He suffers, for He knows all that is going on now and all that is to follow. Lying in that manger, bound hand and foot with swathing-bands, He knows that He will one day be bound with ropes and lie on a harder bed. The journey He begins this Christmas night must end on Calvary. Oh, to think that these little hands and feet will one day be pierced with nails and this baby forehead wear a crown of thorns!

Colloquy with Christ and His Mother. Sleep, holy Babe, page 394.

MEDITATION XVII

THE ANGELS

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—An angel announces to the shepherds the good tidings of great joy, and then a host of blessed spirits fills the heavens, singing: "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to men of good will" (Luke ii. 14).

Mental Picture.—The midnight sky filled with bright angels.

Petition.—True peace.

FIRST POINT.—The angel announces the birth of

the Messias, not to the wise, for they are proud, nor to the rich, for they are avaricious, nor to the noble, for they are worldly-minded; but to these shepherds, for they are poor and lowly. "I confess to Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones" (*Matt. xi. 25*).

"And the angel said to them: Fear not; for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people; for this day is born to you a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David." Born not to us, but to you, who need Him so much and have waited for Him so long.

SECOND POINT.—"And this shall be a sign unto you; you shall find the infant wrapped in swaddling-clothes and laid in a manger." Strange signs these of the newborn king, "the expectation of nations, the desire of the everlasting hills!" (*Gen. xlix. 26.*) Infancy, poverty, humility—these are the signs by which the Lord of glory is to be known. Do I find these signs in myself? Am I one of Christ's little ones? Am I poor in spirit? Am I meek and humble of heart? If not, then Jesus is not yet laid in the manger of my soul.

THIRD POINT.—"Glory to God in the highest." Nothing gives such glory to God as the Incarnation of His eternal Son and His birth in poverty and humiliation.

“And on earth peace,” for Christ is the “Prince of peace” (*Is.* ix. 6); yet not of earthly but of heavenly peace. “Peace I leave with you; My peace I give unto you. Not as the world giveth, do I give unto you” (*John* xiv. 27). He gives us peace with God through the remission of sins, peace with one another through Christian charity, peace in our own hearts through the subjection of the flesh to the spirit. “In His days shall justice spring up and abundance of peace” (*Is.* lxxi. 7). “To men of good will;” to those who submit to God’s law, love God’s will, seek God’s glory.

This song of the angels tells us what we should and what we should not strive after in this land of our exile, this vale of tears. Not glory, for that belongs to God alone: “Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to Thy name give glory” (*Ps.* exiii. 1); but peace in God’s friendship, for in that all our happiness consists. Alas! says St. Bernard, “This angelic division whereby glory is allotted to God and peace to men finds no favor with worldings; so in striving after glory they destroy peace. O foolish children of Adam, who, despising peace and thirsting for glory, lose both glory and peace!” (*Ep.* cxxvii.)

Colloquy with the Prince of Peace. Gloria in excelsis, page 380.

MEDITATION XVIII

ADORATION OF THE SHEPHERDS

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—"And they came with haste, and they found Mary and Joseph and the infant lying in the manger" (*Luke ii. 16*).

Mental Picture.—Your favorite treatment of the Nativity.

Petition.—To know, love and follow Jesus.

FIRST POINT.—"And, seeing, they understood of the word that had been spoken to them concerning the child." That is, they recognize Him as the Messiah, the long-promised Redeemer, and falling down they worship Him, giving thanks and making their simple offerings. Then they tell the blessed Mother all they have seen and heard.

SECOND POINT.—"They returned glorifying and praising God" and spreading everywhere those "good tidings of great joy." "But Mary kept all these words pondering them in her heart." What joy it gave her to see the faith and love of those simple-hearted men and to hear them tell of their wondrous vision!

THIRD POINT.—Bethlehem was very crowded that night, and many must have heard of these strange events; but some were too busy with their own affairs to pay much heed; some perhaps

looked into the stable, but, not having the eyes of faith, saw nothing to interest them. Few, if any, believed and adored with the shepherds. Which class do I belong to? From this time forward the shepherds lose sight of their newborn King. The visit of the Magi later on and the massacre of children that followed it they must have heard of; but after that they know no more. It must have been a great trial to their faith; yet they work on till death at their simple calling, in hope and love and wonder at God's inscrutable ways: "Verily Thou art a hidden God, the God of Israel, the Saviour" (*Is.* xlv. 15).

Colloquy with Christ and His Mother. Gloria in Excelsis, page 380.

MEDITATION XIX

THE CIRCUMCISION

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—"And after eight days were accomplished, that the Child should be circumcised, His name was called Jesus, which was called by the angel before He was conceived in the womb" (*Luke* ii. 21).

Mental Picture.—The divine Child in His Mother's arms.

Petition.—To know, love, and follow Jesus.

FIRST POINT.—Our Saviour's circumcision was an act of obedience to the law, from which, as God and lawgiver, He was exempt. It was also an act of humility; for circumcision was an acknowledgment of sin, and Christ was free from sin; yet in everything except sin He would be like to us. So in His circumcision He bears the mark of sin, in His baptism the repute of sin, in His passion the penalty of sin.

SECOND POINT.—This circumcision involved keen suffering; for, unlike other children, He had the full use of reason and knew all that was going on. It therefore shows His great love for God and for us. The blood He sheds this day is enough to redeem the world; yet it is only an earnest of what He means to do hereafter; for there is "with Him plentiful redemption" (*Ps. cxxix. 7*).

THIRD POINT.—"The circumcision of the heart," of which St. Paul speaks (*Rom. ii, 29*), we must all undergo if we would be acceptable to God. That means the cutting away of all inordinate love for the world and the flesh; and as Christ shed His blood in three ways—first in His circumcision, by the hand of God's minister; secondly, in the Garden of Olives, from internal sorrow; thirdly, in His passion, from the cruelty of His enemies; so the sufferings by which we are to be sanctified must come partly from the authority of those placed over us, partly from our own spirit of penance,

and partly from the ill treatment of other men.

Colloquy with the infant Jesus. Sleep, holy Babe, page 394.

MEDITATION XX

THE HOLY NAME

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History, Mental Picture, and Petition as above.

FIRST POINT.—The obedience and humility of Our Lord in submitting to this painful law is at once followed by the imposition of the Holy Name, *Jesus*. “He emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and in habit found as a man. He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross; for which cause God also hath exalted Him and hath given Him a name which is above all names” (*Philipp. ii. 7*). “He that humbleth himself shall be exalted” (*Luke xiv. 11*).

SECOND POINT.—The name of *Jesus* is a most glorious name. It sums up in itself all those mighty titles given to the *Messias* by the prophet: “His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, God, the Mighty, the Father of the world to come, the Prince of peace” (*Is. ix. 6*).

It is a victorious name: “That in the name of *Jesus* every knee should bow, of those that are in

heaven, on earth, and under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father'' (*Philipp.* ii. 10). Yet for the time being men on earth can and do refuse the homage due to this sacred name. Oh, that I could help to make them know and serve it! May God change their hearts. May He send forth laborers into His harvest to convert all mankind to the love and worship of Jesus Christ.

THIRD POINT.—The name of Jesus is a most sweet name; for it signifies Saviour and so recalls all that He has done for us in becoming man. It is, as St. Bernard says, "Honey in the mouth, melody in the ear, rapture in the heart. It is also a name of healing; for, is any one sad? let the name of Jesus spring from his heart to his lips, and before the light of that name every cloud of sorrow will disappear and the sun will shine forth once more'' (*Sup. Cant.* xv).

Colloquy with the infant Jesus. Sleep, holy Babe, page 394.

MEDITATION XXI

THE PURIFICATION AND PRESENTATION

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—The holy Virgin goes up to Jerusalem to be purified and to present her child to the Lord.

Simeon, taking the child in his arms, sings his *Nunc dimittis* (*Luke ii. 22*).

Mental Picture.—Jesus in the old man's arms, Mary and Joseph standing by.

Petition.—Holy desire and utter self-surrender.

FIRST POINT.—We mark our Lady's obedience, in imitation of her Son, to a law which was not made for her; her humility in ranking herself with the unclean; her poverty; for she makes the offering of the poor, "a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons"; the devotion with which she offers her son and His to the eternal Father. Let me do likewise in Holy Mass.

And the divine Child offers Himself as a victim for the sins of the world. I will offer myself along with my Saviour, begging God to forgive and forget my sins for His sake.

SECOND POINT.—"And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Ghost was in him." The Jews looked back nigh two thousand years to the time of Abraham, one thousand to that of David, who was to them much as Alfred the Great is to the English people. What wonder that they grew weary of waiting? "If it make any delay," said one of their prophets, "wait for it; for it shall surely come, and it shall not be slack" (*Hab. ii. 3*). And that was hundreds of years ago! How slow is

God! slow, because eternal. A thousand years are to Him as one day; but not to us, O Lord, not to us. If God is slow with me, perhaps it is that, like the Jews, by my sins and infidelities I have kept Him waiting. Or, may be I have no earnest desire for His coming. If, with holy Simeon, I wait for the consolation of Israel I shall see it as he did. "He had received an answer from the Holy Ghost that he should not see death till he had seen the Christ of the Lord"; and now he holds Him in his arms.

THIRD POINT.—He blesses God: "Now Thou dost dismiss Thy servant, O Lord, according to Thy word in peace; because my eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples a light to the revelation of the gentiles and the glory of Thy people Israel."

We are the gentiles; and have we not seen the light of this great revelation? Oh, let us recognize how much we owe to Christ, our Saviour! If He had not come what would the world be by this time, and what would be our fate?

Colloquy with Christ and His Mother. Sume, Domine, page 398.

MEDITATION XXII

THE PROPHECY OF SIMEON

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—Simeon foretells the sorrows of the Child and His Mother (*Luke* ii. 34).

Mental Picture.—As before.

Petition.—That out of my heart loyal and loving thoughts may be revealed.

FIRST POINT.—“Behold, this child is set for the fall and for the resurrection of “many in Israel.” Jesus comes to save all men; but many in every generation turn a deaf ear to His teaching, so that for them His blood is shed in vain. “In Him was life, and the life was the light of men; and the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. . . . He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not” (*John* i. 4, 5, 10, 11). Christ is set for the fall of such men; but for the resurrection of men of good will. “As many as received Him, He gave them power to be made the sons of God, to them that believe in His name” (*John* i, 12).

SECOND POINT.—“And for a sign of contradiction.” This is a forecast of the hatred and persecution the Messiah was to meet with from His

people, ending in the cruel and shameful death of the cross. It also foreshadows all the sins of apostate Christians, whom St. Paul describes as “crucifying again to themselves the Son of God, and making Him a mockery” (*Heb.* vi. 6).

Am I for Christ or against Him?

THIRD POINT.—“And thy own soul a sword shall pierce, that out of many hearts thoughts may be revealed.” Our Lady’s sorrows are here foretold. She is to suffer with her Son, that the sight of the sinless Mother standing beneath the cross whereon the Lamb of God hangs dying may act in every generation as a test to reveal the hidden thoughts of men; thoughts of love and loyalty, thoughts of coldness and indifference, or thoughts—strange that there should be such!—of diabolical hatred. What are my thoughts? I must either love Christ and His Mother, or hate them, or care not enough to do either. For them who love the day will surely come when out of the divine heart of their Saviour and the sinless heart of His Mother thoughts shall be revealed which will make them eternally happy.

Mary has known long since that her Child is to be the victim for the sins of men; but these words of Simeon come as a fresh revelation to her; the terrible future now stands out more clear than ever, and she goes back to her home at Nazareth

clasping her babe to her bosom with a heart torn with agonizing grief and fear.

Colloquy with Jesus and Mary. Alma Redemptoris, page 375.

MEDITATION XXIII

THE STAR OF JACOB

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—"When Jesus therefore was born in Bethlehem of Juda in the days of King Herod, behold, there came wise men from the East to Jerusalem saying: "Where is He that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen His star in the East and are come to adore Him" (*Matt.* ii, 1).

Mental Picture.—The three kings following the star.

Petition.—Courage to obey God's holy inspirations.

FIRST POINT.—This star had been foretold by the prophet Balaam: "A star shall rise out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall spring up from Israel. . . . Out of Jacob shall he come that shall rule" (*Num.* xxiv. 17, 19). This prophecy was known all through the East; yet of all the multitudes that saw the star only three men rose up to follow it. The world is always the same; it is as indifferent

now to the things of God as it was then; "for many are called, but few chosen" (*Matt.* xx. 16). They were wise men who followed, fools who stopped at home—"the number of fools is infinite" (*Eccles.* i. 15); and no doubt the fools, as they always do, laughed at the wise men. Many seem to think that, instead of going in search of their Saviour, they may well wait till He comes to look for them, forgetting that He has already left heaven and come down on earth for no other object. Is it too much, then, to ask that, like the three kings, they should take some trouble to offer Him their grateful worship? Is it to Christ's advantage or their own that they should do so?

SECOND POINT.—On reaching Jerusalem, they enter the city, asking: "Where is He that is born King of the Jews?" Mark their great faith. They do not inquire if such a king has been born—of that they are certain; but only the place of his birth. Their courage, too, is marvelous. Jerusalem is the royal city; there is a king on the throne; yet they are not afraid to inquire for one who claims his title.

And King Herod "was troubled and all Jerusalem," which ought to have received the tidings with delight, was troubled "with him." Such is the way of the world.

THIRD POINT.—"And assembling together all the chief priests and the scribes of the people he in-

quired of them where Christ should be born. But they said to him: in Bethlehem of Juda; for so it is written by the prophet."

It was Christ, then, that was indicated by this wondrous star. The Jews knew it well. Even Herod, who was no Jew, had no doubt about it. God was thus giving His faithless people a distinct call to welcome their Messias; but, says St. Augustine: "The Magi came seeking in the land of the Jews a king whom in their own land the Jews would not acknowledge. . . . The Jews had the keeping of the sacred books that by them the Gentiles might be brought to the light and their own eyes be darkened." (*Serm. ii, de Epiph.*) The Magi wait to hear no more; but at once turn their backs upon Jerusalem. What is the royal city to them if Jesus is not there? Herod's luxurious palace has no charm for them; the Temple itself hardly arrests their gaze. They have come with one object and they can not rest until they attain it. They have scarce passed out of the city gates when the star appears once more, "and seeing the star they rejoiced with exceeding great joy."

Colloquy with our Saviour, the Light of the world. Gloria in excelsis, page 380.

MEDITATION XXIV

THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—"And entering into the house they found the child with Mary, His mother, and falling down they adored Him, and opening their treasures they offered Him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh" (*Matt.* ii. 11).

Mental Picture.—Your favorite treatment of the scene.

Petition.—A living faith.

FIRST POINT.—Great is the amazement of these holy men when the star comes to a stand over so poor a dwelling; yet their faith is not a whit shaken; they recognize at once that the Kingdom of the Messiah is "not of this world." "And they found the child with Mary, his mother." So did the shepherds; so does every one who finds Jesus at all; they that will not have Mary must go without her Son. At the sight of the holy child the great mystery is revealed to them and with intense faith and joy they acknowledge Him as their King, their Saviour, and their God. Great, indeed, was their faith; yet we are able to evince a faith more wonderful still. In the Blessed Sacrament our Saviour is more completely hidden than He was at Bethlehem. There is no star to point

Him out; all our senses seem to tell us that He is not here; yet we believe He is and worship Him as they did. "Blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed" (*John* xx. 29).

SECOND POINT.—"And falling down they adored Him; and opening their treasures they offered Him gifts"; gold to their King, as a sign of loyalty; frankincense to their God, as a sign of worship and constant remembrance; myrrh to their fellow-man, who was to redeem the world by His death, as a sign of sympathy. These are gifts we can all offer; but to those who have taken the vows of religion gold is also the emblem of poverty, myrrh of chastity, frankincense of obedience.

THIRD POINT.—Our Lady's joy. She recalled the prophecy of David: "The kings of Tharsis and the islands shall offer presents, the kings of the Arabians and of Saba shall bring gifts, and all the kings of the earth shall adore Him; all nations shall serve Him" (*Ps.* lxxi. 10). She listened to the wondrous story the Magi had to tell, and again "she kept all these words, pondering in her heart." Then the Magi, "having received an answer in sleep that they should not return to Herod, went back another way into their own country," filled, we may be sure, with heavenly consolation.

Colloquy with Christ and His Mother. Sleep, holy Babe, page 394.

MEDITATION XXV

THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—By God's command the Holy Family fly into Egypt to escape the vengeance of Herod (*Matt.* ii. 13).

Mental Picture.—See them on their journey, or resting on the way.

Petition.—To share my Saviour's lot.

FIRST POINT.—How soon Our Lord has become "a sign of contradiction"! Already Herod seeks His life. Am I ready to undergo persecution for His sake? Whether it is deserved for past sins or not, whether it comes from bad men or good, let me bear it for love of Him and in union with Him and I know all will be well with me. If my Christianity is worth anything, I can not expect to escape it, and indeed I ought not to wish to do so. "The servant," says Our Lord, "is not greater than his master. If they have persecuted Me they will also persecute you" (*John* xv. 20). "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 *Tim.* iii. 12). How dear to God was this persecuted family!

SECOND POINT.—Almighty God could have delivered His Son from the hands of Herod in some other way; but it was His will that He should be

saved by flight. So wicked men in every age have waged war against His Church, and He lets them work their will, seems to give way before them; but when they have sung their song of triumph they go down to the grave, and then the Church which they thought to have trodden into the dust rises once more above them in all its strength and beauty. "There is no wisdom, there is no prudence, there is no counsel against the Lord" (*Prov.* xxi. 30). We also must sometimes fly before those that oppose us. When a principle is involved we may have to defend our rights; otherwise it is often better to give way, leaving our cause in God's hands. God's ways are inscrutable. He knows how to draw victory from what looks like defeat.

THIRD POINT.—The obedience of St. Joseph.—Without a word of protest or excuse he does exactly what he is told. In the middle of the night an angel appears saying: "Arise, and take the child and His mother, and fly into Egypt, and be there till I shall tell thee. Who arose and took the child and His mother by night and retired into Egypt; and he was there until the death of Herod. But when Herod was dead behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in sleep to Joseph saying: Arise, and take the child and His mother, and go into the land of Israel. Who arose and took the child and His mother and came into the land of Israel."

How pleasing to God is this perfect readiness to

do His will! Mary and her child left themselves in Joseph's hands; and to us, as to them, God's will is commonly made known through our parents, or pastors, and other lawful superiors. So long as we are truly submissive we may trust God to protect us. "He that dwelleth in the aid of the Most High shall abide under the protection of the God of Jacob. . . . He will overshadow thee with His shoulders, and under His wings thou shalt trust. His truth shall compass thee with a shield; thou shalt not be afraid of the terror of the night. . . . For He hath given His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways" (Ps. xc. 1, 4, 5, 11).

Colloquy with Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. Sleep. holy Babe, page 394.

MEDITATION XXVI

THE HOLY INNOCENTS

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—"Then Herod, perceiving that he was deluded by the wise men, was exceeding angry and sending killed all the men-children that were in Bethlehem and in all the borders thereof from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men" (Matt. ii. 16).

Mental Picture.—A mother mourning over her dead child.

Petition.—Grace to understand the mystery of suffering.

FIRST POINT.—Our Saviour has no sooner entered into this world than He brings trouble on those He loves best. Simeon foretells His mother's sorrows; presently the Holy Family have to go into exile to escape the vengeance of Herod; and because Christ was born in their city all the male children of Bethlehem are slaughtered by the tyrant. Evidently the cross is a token of God's love.

SECOND POINT.—Mary and Joseph shared with joy the sufferings of the divine Child; not so the poor bereaved mothers of Bethlehem. To them the slaughter of their little ones was mere meaningless cruelty. They did not see the hand of God in it. They did not know that their innocent babes were dying for Him who had come from heaven to die for them. But we have more light than they, and in the spirit of faith we come to realize how "sweet are the uses of adversity." It atones for sin; it softens the heart and prepares it for grace; it fills us with pity for others; it draws down God's pity on ourselves; it makes us like to Christ.

When we hear a well-known voice or footstep on the stair we start up saying: "That is my

friend!" Well, sorrow is the footstep of God; it is His voice; it is His hand touching us and bidding us look up into His face, and own that He is our best friend, our Father.

THIRD POINT.—The reward. How little did those heartbroken mothers dream how great it would be! that those baby martyrs they were weeping over were to be honored on earth by a festival at Christmas-tide to show their close connection with the Saviour of the world, and in heaven by a more wondrous union still which that festival typified.

So ends all sorrow borne for God. *Per crucem ad lucem*; through the weariness and pain of the cross to the eternal rest and perpetual light of heaven.

Colloquy with the Babe of Bethlehem. Sleep, holy Babe, page 394.

MEDITATION XXVII

JESUS LOST AND FOUND

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—They went up to Jerusalem at the solemn day of the Pasch and "when they returned the child Jesus remained in Jerusalem, and His parents knew it not. And, thinking He was in the

company, they came a day's journey, and sought Him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. And, not finding Him, they returned into Jerusalem, seeking Him" (*Luke ii. 43-45*).

Mental Picture.—Our Lady and St. Joseph in silent sorrow going back to Jerusalem, or returning to Nazareth full of joy with the holy Child between them.

Petition.—To seek and find Jesus.

FIRST POINT.—Their grief, that of Our Lady especially; we who love so coldly can not realize it. Jesus was the joy of Mary's life, the light of her eyes. They had never before been separated. She knew that He was to be the victim for the sins of men, and all sorts of dreadful suspicions and fears now crowded upon her soul.

Too often have I lost Jesus by my sins. Did I know what I had lost? Did it afflict me? "He that loseth Jesus loseth much, yea, more than all the world. To be without Jesus is a grievous hell, to be with Jesus a sweet paradise" (*Á Kempis, ii, 8*). Let me pray for all sinners, that they may feel the misery of their separation from Him.

SECOND POINT.—"And it came to pass that after three days they found Him in the Temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, hearing them and asking them questions." Now for the first time His

Mother understood that He had left her of His own accord, and it pierced her to the heart. "Son," she said, "why hast Thou done so to us? Behold, thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing. And He said to them: How is it that you sought Me?" A strange question to be sure! What more natural than for a mother to seek her child? And how cold and harsh it sounds! For the moment, no doubt, it gives great pain; but the wound shall presently be healed by Him who made it. To me may He not rather say: "How is it that you sought Me not?" Meantime our Saviour is teaching us all this great lesson, that every human bond, even the holiest, must be broken for the sake of God. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart" (*Matt.* xxii. 37).

THIRD POINT.—"Did ye not know that I must be about My Father's business?" What is this business of His Father that is so urgent upon Him? The redemption of the human race, my redemption. "In the head of the book it is written of Me, that I should do Thy will" (*Ps.* xxxix. 8). "I am come to cast fire on the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled?" (*Luke* xii. 49.) "I have glorified Thee on earth. I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do" (*John* xvii. 4). If Christ is so earnest to save my soul, if He can call my salvation His Father's business, must not I, too, be about it? Is it not my business also?

“And they undertood not the word that He spoke unto them.” It is hard to believe that Our Lady did not understand. She knew better than any whose son He was and why He had come on earth, though of course she may not have clearly seen what was His object in causing her so much pain.

However, it has been argued with conclusive force that these words should be referred to the rabbis who overheard what was said. They certainly did not understand.¹

And now Jesus, knowing well what pain He has caused His loving parents, puts one hand in that of His Mother, the other in that of St. Joseph and, looking up in their faces with all the old tenderness, goes down with them to Nazareth. “And His Mother kept all these words in her heart.” Let me do the same, learning from this mystery to prefer God’s will and God’s glory to everything on earth.

Colloquy with Jesus, Mary and Joseph. Sume, Domine, page 398.

¹ F. M. POWER, S.J., *Irish Theological Quarterly*, 1912.

MEDITATION XXVIII

THE HIDDEN LIFE

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—"And He went down with them and came to Nazareth and was subject to them. And Jesus advanced in wisdom and age and grace with God and men" (*Luke ii. 51*).

Mental Picture.—Jesus working with Joseph in the carpenter's shop while Mary sits beside them at her spinning-wheel.

Petition.—A life hidden with Christ in God.

FIRST POINT.—"He was subject to them." Who was subject? The eternal God, King of kings and Lord of lords. To whom was He subject? To His own creatures. In what? In the humblest offices of a poor man's household. He drew water from the well, ran on errands, worked with Joseph at his trade, learned His humble craft from him and practised it just as He had learned it, thinking out no new inventions, but keeping to the old lines, being just a village carpenter and nothing more; for He knew that by far the greater number of His followers would lead dull, uneventful, and laborious lives, having no ambitions beyond the fields they tilled, or the workshops in which they carried on their daily toil. And by so doing He has ennobled poverty and taught the dignity of

labor. Every artisan, every hedger and ditcher can henceforth say to himself: Jesus Christ, the Son of God, toiled for His daily bread as I do. And He lived this hidden, humble life for thirty years!

Give me grace, dear Lord, to love honest toil and a lowly condition; above all, whatever my calling may be, to lead a life "hid with Christ in God" (*Col.* iii. 3).

SECOND POINT.—He "grew in wisdom and in age." From His very conception Jesus possessed the fulness of wisdom; but, like the sun which "goeth forward and increaseth even to perfect day" (*Prov.* iv. 18), He showed forth daily more and more of that heavenly light within Him; or like a bud which, opening its petals, displays their lovely tints and sheds its sweet scent on the air.

I, too, am growing in age; can I say that I am growing in wisdom, true wisdom, that is, the knowledge of God and the knowledge of myself?

THIRD POINT.—"And in grace with God and men." To grow in God's favor is the all-important thing; so long as He is pleased with us it matters but little what men think; yet for their sakes and our own and for God's glory we should do our utmost to live on good terms with all around us. "To no man rendering evil for evil; providing good things, not only in the sight of God, but also in the sight of all men; if it be pos-

sible, as much as is in you, having peace with all men'' (*Rom. xii. 17*).

Colloquy with Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. In them we have the model of a perfect family, father, mother, and child. *Anima Christi*, page 376.

PART III

OUR LORD'S PUBLIC LIFE

INTRODUCTION

THE ACTIVE AND CONTEMPLATIVE LIVES

THE life of the spirit is made up partly of outward action, and this is called the active life; and partly of inward action, and this is the contemplative; when the two are combined we have the mixed life, such as we see in Christ our Lord. Martha and her sister Mary are taken by the Fathers as types of the two first.

THE ACTIVE LIFE

“A certain woman named Martha received Him into her house” (*Luke* x. 38). Here are indicated the three services of the active life:

1. To prepare a lodging for Christ in ourselves, by works of penance cleansing both soul and body from sin, since “Wisdom will not enter into a malicious soul, nor dwell in a body subject to sins” (*Wis.* i. 4), and by silencing the lower appetites, so as to secure peace, and by adorning our dwelling with virtues.

2. To entertain Christ in His poor by the exercise of the corporal works of mercy.

3. To prepare a lodging for Him in the souls of other men by the practice of the spiritual works of mercy.

THE CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE

“And she had a sister called Mary, who sitting also at the Lord’s feet heard His word.” While Martha was bustling about, “busy about much serving,” Mary was resting quietly, according to the word of the Psalmist: “Be still and see that I am God” (*Ps.* xlv. 11). “At the Lord’s feet,” those feet she had once bathed with tears, and where she had found mercy. And “heard His word.” “I will hear what the Lord will speak in me” (*Ps.* lxxxiv. 9).

THESE TWO ARE COMPLEMENTARY

There is an idea very widely spread in these restless, utilitarian days of ours that the contemplative life is a useless and idle one. This would not seem to be Our Lord’s teaching; for when Martha complains of her sister for not helping her He defends her, saying: “Mary hath chosen the better part, which shall not be taken away from her.”

The fact is that, while there is plenty of work to be done on all sides, the world never needed the Contemplative Orders so much as now, when men

are giving themselves up heart and soul to external things. Those who never pray for themselves need some one to pray for them, and this is just what these Orders do. Moreover, they serve as a protest against the prevalent spirit of worldliness and as a constant reminder to men of their dependence on God, which they are so prone to lose sight of.

OF MODERATION IN ACTION

“Martha, Martha, thou art careful and art solicitous about many things.” Some people are by nature strenuous and active. They must learn to exercise restraint and give themselves time to think and pray; otherwise the result of their activity will be very disappointing. “Not in bread alone doth man live, but in every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (*Matt.* iv. 4).

Then there is such a thing as indiscreet zeal, which is “solicitous about many things,” wanting to do them all at the same time. We must remember that we all have our limitations, and if we overstep them we shall only skimp our work and produce nothing fit to be seen. “The wisdom of a scribe cometh by his time of leisure; and he that is less in action shall receive wisdom” (*Ecclus.* xxxviii. 25).

THE ONE THING NECESSARY

God's will, God's glory, and, inseparably bound up therewith, my own salvation, this is the one thing necessary. "What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul?" (*Matt.* xvi. 16.) Everything, therefore, which does not bear on this is but vanity and affliction of spirit; to glorify God by saving my soul is my one great duty, the one end of my creation.

THE EXCELLENCE OF THE CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE

"Mary hath chosen the best part which shall not be taken away from her." She has chosen it; for, though God inspires the desire, the human will is free to respond or not. It is the best part, because it is the beginning on earth of that life we hope hereafter to lead in heaven. It shall not be taken away; for nothing can claim the right to stand between the soul and God.

THE SUPREME EXCELLENCE OF THE MIXED LIFE

Our Saviour calls the Contemplative Life a part, implying that when it is combined with its counterpart, the Active Life, the product is something more perfect than either. This was His own life, a mingling of prayer and labor, both being directed to the glory of God and the salvation of men, and nothing can surpass this.

MEDITATION I

THE LIFE OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—"John was in the desert baptizing and preaching the baptism of penance unto remission of sins. . . . And John was clothed with camel's hair and a leathern girdle about his loins, and he ate locusts and wild honey" (*Mark* i. 4).

Mental Picture.—The Baptist preaching on the banks of the Jordan.

Petition.—Hearty devotion to God's cause.

FIRST POINT.—John withdrew as a child into the desert and there led a most mortified life, apart from other men, exposed to all weathers and with none of those comforts which even the poorest can enjoy.

Why did he do this? Not to atone for his sins, for he had committed none; but to subject the flesh to the spirit and to make himself fit for his high calling as the forerunner of the Messiah. I am a sinner; should not I then "work the works of penance."

His solitary life was one of constant prayer and closest union with God, and we may be sure that, like his divine Master, he was savagely assailed and tempted by the evil one; but he was no reed to be shaken by the wind, though it rose to a tempest.

His heart was pure, his loyalty to God supreme: "Amen, I say to you, there hath not risen among them that are born of women a greater than John the Baptist." This is he of whom it is written: "Behold I send My angel before Thy face who shall prepare Thy way before Thee" (*Matt.* xi. 11, 10).

SECOND POINT.—His preaching.—What burning words coming straight from the great heart within him! How fearless his reproof of vice and hypocrisy! The pharisee he scourges, as did Our Lord, with words of scathing anger; Herod he spares not in his incestuous lust; yet how gentle he is to the poor—he who is so severe on himself! The soldier is to do no violence and to be content with his pay, the publican is not to be extortionate, all are to give alms to those poorer than themselves; that is all.

And what is the effect of his preaching? "There went out to him all the country of Judea, and all they of Jerusalem, and were baptized by him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins" (*Mark* i. 5). He worked no miracles; but he himself was a miracle. His holy and mortified life touched the hearts of his hearers more deeply than if he had made the sun stand still in the sky. So it always will be; a holy life is the most persuasive of sermons. God send us men with the spirit of St. John who will live what they preach! And I,

though I may not be commissioned to preach the Gospel, can, if I will, by a Christ-like example lead others to Christ.

THIRD POINT.—His death.—He dies, as he has lived, for truth and holiness. From his prison he sends a message to our Saviour; but it is not to ask Him to save him from death. “Art Thou He that is to come, or look we for another?” John does not ask this question for his own enlightenment; has he not already pointed Our Lord out in the clearest terms? It is for the sake of the people, that Christ, if it so please Him, may declare Himself; and so He does to all that have ears to hear. “Go and relate to John what you have heard and seen. The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise again, the poor have the gospel preached to them; and blessed is he that shall not be scandalized in Me” (*Matt. xi. 4-6*). What could be clearer? St. John’s work is done. The Messiah has openly declared Himself, and he can die content. What wonder that our Saviour should break out in praise of His faithful servant: “What went you out into the desert to see?” (*Matt. xi. 7.*)

Colloquy with St. John, the great lover of Christ. O Deus, ego amo Te, page 385.

MEDITATION II

ST. JOHN'S WITNESS TO CHRIST

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—"And this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent from Jerusalem priests and levites to him to ask him: Who art thou?" (*John* i. 19.)

Mental Picture.—John on the banks of the Jordan confronted by the emissaries of the Jews.

Petition.—Whole-hearted loyalty to Christ.

FIRST POINT.—"And he confessed. . . . I am not the Christ."—That they should have taken him for the Messiah shows what a sensation his preaching made and how great was the repute of his holiness. "What then? Art thou Elias? and he said: I am not. Art thou the prophet? and he answered: No." The angel Gabriel had declared of John that he should go before the Lord "in the spirit and power of Elias" (*Luke* i. 17). Our Lord also spoke of him as Elias: "I say to you that Elias is already come, and they knew him not" (*Matt.* xvii. 12). Yet John will not make this claim for himself. "They said therefore unto him: Who art thou? . . . What sayest thou of thyself? He said: I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness: Make straight the way of the Lord." This is all he has to say of himself. He is nothing; he

is a nameless nobody; he is but the voice of another. What perfect self-effacement is here!

SECOND POINT.—“Why, then, dost thou baptize, if thou be not Christ nor Elias nor the prophet? I baptize with water; but there hath stood one in the midst of you whom you know not. The same is He that shall come after me, who is preferred before me, the latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to loose.” John had been invited to speak of himself; but, having described himself as a voice, he begins at once to speak of Him whose voice he is. His one object is to make Him known; he lives only for His glory. “He that hath the bride, is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom who standeth and heareth him rejoiceth with joy because of the bridegroom’s voice. This my joy therefore is fulfilled” (*John* iii. 29). What a beautiful thought! Christ is the bridegroom who espouses His Church in His own blood; “for Christ loved the Church and delivered Himself up for it, . . . that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish” (*Eph.* v. 25, 27). And John, the bridegroom’s bosom friend, stands by rejoicing in his friend’s joy; and then, in the fullness of his unselfish delight he cries out: “He must increase; but I must decrease.” Oh, that I could love Jesus as John loved Him!

THIRD POINT.—Shortly after this he points Our Lord out to his own disciples, saying: “Behold the Lamb of God. Behold Him who taketh away the sin of the world.” Thereupon they leave him to follow Christ, and once more John is glad; he meant them to do so. Thus it is to the end. All for Jesus, nothing for himself. But hear what his Master says of him. “This is he of whom it is written: Behold, I send My angel before Thy face who shall prepare Thy way before Thee.” John has declared that he is not a prophet; Christ says that he is “more than a prophet.” He is an angel, heaven’s messenger, the Forerunner of the long-expected Redeemer. Truly he deserved this great encomium; for he loved Christ to the utter annihilation of self. Let me try and learn this lesson of him.

Colloquy with the divine Bridegroom and his friend. *O Deus, ego amo Te*, page 385.

MEDITATION III

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

Preparatory Prayer, as usual.

History.—“Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to the Jordan, unto John, to be baptized by him” (*Matt.* iii. 13).

Mental Picture.—Our Lord coming up from the

water and the Holy Ghost descending on Him in the form of a dove.

Petition.—To know, love, and follow our Saviour in His humiliation.

FIRST POINT.—Jesus bids farewell to His Mother and then makes His way to the Jordan to be baptized with the baptism of penance, as a preparation for the preaching of the kingdom of God. We see Him mingling with the crowd as though He were Himself a sinner, listening to St. John's earnest warning to repent and fly from the wrath to come and going down in His turn into the river for baptism. By so doing He sets His seal upon the preaching and baptism of His Forerunner, sanctifies the waters which are henceforth to become the instrument of salvation to men, and teaches us all to prepare for great deeds by great humiliations.

SECOND POINT.—“But John stayed Him, saying: I ought to be baptized by Thee, and comest Thou to me?” The Blessed Precursor at once recognizes his Lord. He had leaped for joy in his mother's womb when first they were brought together. Then Jesus had cleansed him from sin; now in return He would receive at his hands the baptism of penance.

John naturally shrinks from doing what he is asked; but Jesus says to him: “Suffer it to be so now; for so it becometh us to fulfil all justice.”

That is, if you obey and I humble myself we shall thereby fulfil all justice, seeing that justice or holiness is founded on humility and obedience. What a lesson this for me!

THIRD POINT.—“And Jesus, being baptized, forthwith came out of the water,” praying, says St. Luke, “and lo! the heavens were opened to Him and He saw the spirit of God descending as a dove and coming upon Him; and behold, a voice from heaven saying: This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.” Each word of this declaration deserves to be pondered. *This*—this mortal man who has just been baptized as a sinner, *is My Son*; not by adoption, but by nature, begotten “before the daystar” (*Ps. cix. 3*), light of light, very God of very God, consubstantial with Me, His Father. *My beloved, Son*, that is My only Son, who does My will in all things. *In Whom I am well pleased*, so well that no other can please Me save in Him, through Him, and with Him.

What a glorious manifestation of the ever-blessed Trinity—the Father speaking from heaven to His incarnate Son on earth, while the Holy Ghost hovers over Him!

Colloquy with the three divine Persons. The Creed.

MEDITATION IV

CHRIST'S FAST IN THE DESERT

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—"Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil; and when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterwards He was hungry" (*Matt.* iv. 1).

Mental Picture.—Jesus on the mountain-side exhausted by His long fast.

Petition.—Grace to prepare for and to resist temptation.

FIRST POINT.—Two questions arise: 1. How could Satan venture to tempt Our Lord? 2. Why did He allow Himself to be tempted?

Satan's object in tempting our Saviour was to find out if He was really the Son of God; for, as he had deceived our first parents, God's justice required that he should be deceived in his turn.

The way in which St. Luke introduces the Temptation of Christ is remarkable. "And Jesus Himself was beginning about the age of thirty years, being, as it was supposed, the son of Joseph" (*Luke* iii. 23). What connection can there be between the Temptation and St. Joseph? We may perhaps explain it as follows.

Our Lady's immaculate holiness had filled Satan with dread. Surely, he thought, this must be the

woman of prophecy who is to crush my head; but when she was publicly married to St. Joseph he took heart again; the mother of the Messiah was to be a virgin; therefore not a wife. Then, when the child Jesus grew up so full of heavenly beauty, His birth, too, having been attended by such strange signs and wonders, Satan's fears came back with redoubled force; still the fact of that marriage was there to reassure him.

Now, however, when the voice was heard from heaven, saying: "This is My beloved Son," Satan must have been aware of it, and one might think his doubts would have been set at rest forever; but then the Jews often applied the term, son of God, much as we use the word "saint," to any man who stood high in God's favor. What was its meaning here? It was to find this out that he resolved to tempt Jesus, a hazardous experiment in truth; for it might end in a crushing overthrow from which his fiendish pride shrank with great dread; but anything seemed better than the torture of suspense he had endured so long.

SECOND POINT.—Our Saviour suffered Himself to be tempted for two reasons:

1. To merit strength for us in our warfare against the powers of darkness; "for in that wherein He Himself hath suffered and been tempted He is able to succor them also that are tempted" (*Heb. ii. 18*).

2. To teach us by His own example how to combat temptations of every kind. Our Lord's temptations were in one respect, of course, different from ours. In Him there was no concupiscence, none of that fearful heeling over to sin which we find in ourselves; yet, though what He endured was only external suggestion, how loving it was of Him to subject Himself to it for our sakes, to let that accursed demon carry Him about and whisper treason in His ear and try by fraudulent and unworthy bribes to purchase His homage!

THIRD POINT.—Our Lord's preparation for temptation was threefold:

1. Humiliation; for by His baptism He who came to make atonement for the sins of the world took upon Himself the character and the public repute of a sinner.

2. Penance. The long fast under the open sky, the phrase "forty days and forty nights" implying that He neither ate nor slept, left Him utterly exhausted.

3. Prayer, earnest, uninterrupted, "the prayer of God" St. Luke calls it, the prayer of the Good Shepherd for His flock and every lamb of it, that prayer begun in the womb of His Mother, going on all through His life on earth, still continued in the tabernacle, and never to end so long as there is a human soul to save. He thought of each of us, of all our dangers and temptations and falls, and

begged for mercy and grace for one and all. O good Jesus, if Thou hadst not prayed for me, where should I be now? Help me by humiliation, penance, and prayer to fortify my soul against the assaults of the evil one.

Colloquy with Jesus Christ. Anima Christi, page 376.

MEDITATION V

THE TEMPTATIONS OF CHRIST

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—Three times was He assailed by Satan, each attack being more violent than the one before it. Then the angels came and ministered to their Lord (*Matt. iv.*).

Mental Picture.—Jesus taking food after the temptation.

Petition.—Courage to fight the good fight.

FIRST POINT.—Waiting, vulture-like, till his victim is exhausted, Satan begins his attack; but cautiously at first. He approaches perhaps in the guise of a benevolent old man, full of sympathy and anxious to offer his help. He thinks he must have seen Jesus in the crowd about the Jordan—nay, he feels sure he can not be mistaken; and had he not heard a voice from heaven calling Him the Son of God? Alas! There is nothing to eat in

this wilderness; yet, "if thou be the Son of God," it is just this he wants to discover—"command that these stones be made bread." And what harm could there be in this? Only bread, only just enough to support His sinking strength.

Even so does he deal with us, suggesting slight and harmless things at first, acts in which there may be no semblance of sin. All he asks is that we put ourselves under his guidance, take one step with him. Our Lord rejects the proposal at once: It is written: "Not in bread alone doth man live; but in every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God."

SECOND POINT.—Satan is baffled, and his chagrin makes him forget his usual caution. He takes Our Lord up in the air—thereby, of course, betraying himself—and, carrying Him to Jerusalem, sets Him on a pinnacle of the Temple. How intense must have been Our Lord's horror for this wicked spirit! Yet He suffers him to carry Him about from place to place. Alas! I have felt so little dread of sin! I have given myself into the keeping of this accursed demon and let him work his will with me.

"If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down." Mark it well; he says: "Cast *Thyself* down." He has no power to cast us down; it must be our own doing. "For it is written: He hath given His angels charge over Thee, to keep Thee

in all Thy ways; and in their hands they shall bear Thee up, lest perchance Thou dash Thy foot against a stone." Our Lord had appealed to Scripture, so Satan does the same; but he stops short in his quotation, and with good reason; for the Psalm goes on: "Thou shalt walk upon the asp and the basilisk; thou shalt trample under foot the lion and the dragon"; and all these are scriptural names for himself.

"And Jesus answered: It is written again: Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Our Saviour's object in each of these replies is to hide His divinity by answering as any other man might do.

THIRD POINT.—Then the devil grows desperate. He has suffered two crushing reverses; now he must bring up his big guns. One other temptation he still holds in reserve, the strength whereof he knows few men have been able to resist. It is the riches and pleasures and honors of the world. So he takes Our Lord up into a lofty mountain and there conjures up before His imagination "all the kingdoms of the world and the glory thereof." Rome and Athens are there and the gorgeous cities of the East, decked out in all their majesty and beauty, with their princely palaces and banquet-halls, their luxurious baths and exquisite gardens, with all the pomp of power and all the charms of woman's beauty—oh, think well of it; our good

Jesus allows Himself to be solicited even in this way! And then the lying spirit speaks as follows: "All these will I give Thee if falling down Thou wilt adore me. Then Jesus saith to him: Begone, Satan; for it is written: The Lord thy God shalt thou adore and Him only shalt thou serve." Satan's overthrow is complete. All his doubts are now cleared up; he is face to face with his dreaded foe. Henceforth the demons own to Christ's divinity and tremble in His presence. (*Mark* i. 24; v. 7. *Luke* iv. 41). In all these temptations our Saviour's method of defence is the same. There is not a moment's hesitation; but quick as thought He hurls each impious suggestion back in the tempter's face, and that with the thought of God, whose holy name appears in every one of His replies.

Then angels come and minister to their Lord, bringing Him not miraculous food, but probably some simple pottage prepared by our blessed Lady, to whom they have made known her divine Son's need (Lodolph of Saxony); and while seated on the hillside, He eats what they offer, those happy spirits sing to Him the songs of Sion.

Colloquy.—Let me join my voice with theirs, thanking my loving Saviour for this precious lesson and for all the graces He has earned for me.
Our Father.

MEDITATION VI

THE CALLING OF THE APOSTLES

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—Our Saviour called His Apostles, saying: "Follow Me."

Mental Picture.—The shore of Lake Genesareth—Peter, Andrew, James, and John leaving their nets and all they had in obedience to that call.

Petition.—Grace to do the same in my own measure.

FIRST POINT.—Why did Our Lord choose such poor and simple men?

1. Because He Himself was so. "His communication is with the simple. Was He not Himself one of the people?" (*Prov.* iii. 32.) "Suffer the little children to come unto Me and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven" (*Mark* x. 14).

2. To make His own power in the conversion of the world the more manifest. "The foolish things of the world hath God chosen that He may confound the wise, and the weak things of the world hath God chosen that He may confound the strong . . . that no flesh should glory in His sight" (*1 Cor.* i. 27). "But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me; for I am the Lord that exercise mercy

and judgment and justice in the earth" (*Jer.* ix. 24). So if I would do anything for God's glory I must account myself an unprofitable servant.

SECOND POINT.—"Follow Me." What potent words! They obeyed at once. Not that they were unable to do otherwise. They were quite free; they might have resisted as I have so often done; but it was as when a nightingale suddenly bursts into song. No man is forced to listen; yet he must be a very clod who can pass on his way unmoved. "It may well be that the very brightness and majesty of the hidden Godhead shining in His human face had power at first sight to attract those that looked on it; for if the loadstone and amber can attach to themselves rings and straws and other trifles how much more should the Lord of all have power to draw to Him those whom He calls!" (St. Jerome, in *Matt.* ix.)

THIRD POINT.—The reward of their obedience.—

1. They became the intimate companions of their God and Saviour. "I will not now call you servants, for the servant knoweth not what his lord doth; but I have called you friends, because all things whatsoever I have heard of My Father I have made known to you" (*John* xv. 15).

2. They had power to heal the sick and to cast out devils.

3. They were promised a hundredfold in this world and in the next life everlasting.

4. They were to sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. How generous is Christ to those who follow Him perfectly!

Colloquy with Christ our Saviour. Summe, Domine, page 398.

MEDITATION VII

THE TWO STANDARDS

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—Christ calls all men to follow His standard, Satan to follow his.

Mental Picture.—A great plain near Jerusalem, the city of peace, where the good leader is gathering His forces, and another great plain near Babylon, the city of confusion, where the enemy of the human race is encamped.

Petition.—To know the deceits of the evil one and guard against them; to know also the true life which my Saviour offers me and grace to embrace it.

FIRST POINT.—The proud demon is seated on a lofty throne, surrounded with fire and smoke, the fierce flame of passion and that dense, murky cloud wherewith it obscures the intellect, in appearance horrible and terrible.

He gathers round him all his fellow-demons and sends them out into the whole world, to every coun-

try, city, and village, to every household, to every individual human being. He bids them carry with them nets to ensnare and chains to bind their victims. They are to catch them with love of riches; for this is in most cases the best plan—any kind of riches, it matters not what, anything a man may set his heart on; money, intellectual gifts, acquired skill or knowledge, personal attractions, even clothes. Only get them to fix their affections on some earthly thing and to love it for its own sake.

The next step is to encourage in them a desire for honor. This is easy; for no sooner has a man got anything he thinks he can call his own than he wishes it to be recognized by those around him. He who has made money wants those poorer than himself to pay court to him. The well-dressed man or woman wants to be seen. From a love of honor they can soon be brought to pride, and then all other vices will follow. Such is the general plan.

The devil may approach us in other ways, assailing, e.g., our faith or our purity; yet, even when he holds us bound in other vices, he never rests till he has enslaved us by pride. Pride is his own sin, the sin that ruined him. He beholds with amazement the force of our carnal inclinations; having no body himself, they are a mystery to him; but pride he understands, and well he knows that nothing takes us so far away from God or makes recon-

ciliation with Him so difficult; for it shuts off the grace which might otherwise reach us.

SECOND POINT.—Now turn to the other picture. Christ our Lord is seated on a little hillock in the plain near Jerusalem, amiable and “beautiful above the sons of men” (*Ps.* xliv. 3). He, too, is gathering His followers around Him—not angels; for, though those blessed spirits help us gladly as far as they may, Our Lord’s design is to save men through the ministry of their fellow-men; and He sends them in every direction to spread His holy Gospel: “Go ye, and teach all nations.”

Our Lord’s method is the very antithesis of Satan’s. Teach men, He says, first to practise poverty of spirit, so that they set not their hearts on things of earth, and, if God so inspires them, actual poverty also. From this you can lead them to submit to contempt, even to desire it; and thus humility is secured, and on humility all other virtues attend.

THIRD POINT.—Every true Christian wants to be humble, for he knows that is the way to be like Christ; but the sweet flower of humility grows only on the stalk of humiliation and that springs from the root, poverty of spirit. If, then, we want the flower we must cultivate the plant. I resolve, therefore, not to be one of those who “wish to be humble without contempt, patient without suffering, obedient without constraint, poor without

want, holy without toil, penitent without remorse.”
(Life of Thomas á Kempis.)

Triple Colloquy.—1. To our Lady, asking her to obtain this grace for me from her Son. *Hail Mary*. 2. To Jesus Christ, begging Him to plead for me with His Father. *Anima Christi*, page 376. 3. To the Eternal Father. *Our Father*.

MEDITATION VIII

THE THREE ROADS

(Three Classes of Men)

Preparatory Prayer, as above.

History.—Let me suppose that I have acquired a large sum of money, not sinfully, but without any thought of God or my eternal salvation, and I know in my heart of hearts that my attachment to this money is getting in between me and God. I must find some way of quieting my conscience, and three courses lie open to me. Let me see which is the best.

Mental Picture.—I am standing in the presence of my God, who with all His saints and angels is looking down on me, waiting to see what my choice will be.

Petition.—Grace to choose what is most for the glory of the divine Majesty and the good of my soul.

FIRST POINT.—The first road.—I may do as many another has done before me, resolve to get rid of the encumbrance and so find peace; then palter and fool about with my resolution, putting off the execution of it from day to day and year to year, and end by doing nothing. Now, we are supposing that it is not a matter of salvation, but merely of perfection; so when death comes upon me I do not lose my soul over it, but I die full of regret for not having given it up long ago. Now, on my deathbed, I am forced to part with it and have lost for ever God only knows how much merit. “Seek after peace,” says the Holy Spirit, “and pursue it” (Ps. xxxiii. 15). All my life long I have been desiring peace; yet though I knew how to attain it I would not take the means.

SECOND POINT.—The second road.—I may try to strike a bargain with God, offering to give up the affection, but holding on to the money, or giving the interest, but not the principle, the fruit, but not the tree. I know what God wants of me; I will buy Him off with something else, or I will do what He asks, but only in part, like the faithless Saul, who saved what was precious, destroying only what was vile (1 *Kings* xv). This is all self-deception. I talk of giving up the affection while I keep the thing. Why not try the opposite plan of giving up the thing and keeping the affection? Oh, dear no; that would not suit me at all. Yet

I say I want peace! Do I mean peace in my riches?

THIRD POINT.—The third road.—I may hold myself in readiness to give up the money and the affection with it, and do this at once honestly and whole-heartedly as soon as I know that such is the divine will. This is the only road that leads to true peace, the only worthy way of dealing with my God. We have a beautiful illustration of all this in the story of St. Matthew. When Christ said to him, "Follow Me," he might have answered: "Yea, Lord; but not just now. I will let you know later when I am free to obey." Or again he might have said to himself: "This call is very awkward. I wish He had asked for something else instead. Suppose I try and satisfy Him by making a great feast in His honor, inviting all my friends to meet Him and so swelling the number of His disciples." What Matthew actually did was to follow the third road. He obeyed Our Lord's call at once and then made a great feast to show how glad he was. Had he done anything short of this he would probably have sat in the custom-house to the end of his days and would never have been numbered among the Twelve.

We may apply this meditation to anything that seems to be an obstacle to our perfect conformity with God's will.

Triple Colloquy, as in the last Meditation.

MEDITATION IX

THE MARRIAGE IN CANA OF GALILEE—I

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—"There was a marriage in Cana of Galilee, and the Mother of Jesus was there; and Jesus also was invited, and His disciples, to the marriage" (*John* ii. 1).

Mental Picture.—Mary whispering to her Son.

Petition.—Confidence in Jesus and Mary.

FIRST POINT.—What a blessed marriage was this! Let us take care in all our rejoicings to have Jesus and Mary as our guests. Their presence brings peace and happiness; without them we shall be sad at heart even in the midst of our merry-making.

"The Mother of Jesus was there." Wherever Mary is there Jesus is sure to be, and there shall we also be if we are His disciples.

"And, the wine failing, the Mother of Jesus saith to Him: They have no wine." What a tone of loving trustfulness breathes in this prayer! She makes no formal petition, but merely points out the distress of the young couple, leaving Him to find a remedy. It shows us the motherly care and thoughtfulness of our blessed Lady, and this lesson our Saviour meant us to draw. He knew what

was wrong, yet waited for His Mother to point it out.

SECOND POINT.—“And Jesus said to her: Woman, what is that to Me and to thee? My hour is not yet come.” *Woman*: On three occasions only does the Gospel record words spoken by Christ to His Mother. At the Finding in the Temple He uses no form of address, for He is speaking to Joseph as well. At Cana and on Calvary He calls her “Woman.” Surely, there is something remarkable in this. How do the Prophecies speak of the Blessed Virgin? Do they call her the mother of the Messias? No, she is either called the virgin or the woman: “I will put enmities between thee and the woman” (*Gen.* iii. 15). There is a deep meaning, then, in Our Lord’s use of this title; it is, so to speak, our Lady’s official style, and He used it in each case to show that she was acting in her official capacity. She is the woman as He is the Man; she is the second Eve as He is the second Adam. Full of reverence, then, and rich in significance, this word gives us the key to the whole story; for it shows us that our Lady is here acting in her official character as intercessor for the human family with her divine Son.

THIRD POINT.—“What is that to me and to thee?” This is a form of speech which takes its meaning from attendant circumstances and from the tone and look of the speaker. So the devils,

full of fear in the presence of Christ, cry out deprecatingly: "What have we to do with Thee, Jesus, Son of God?" (*Matt.* vii. 29.) Here, the obvious meaning is: Why do you ask this of Me? The words that follow make this still clearer.

"My hour is not yet come." The time for showing by miracles the power of the Godhead within Me has not yet arrived. Yet He calls her by a name which is an acknowledgment that she has a right to expect an answer to her prayer. Mary makes no reply to this, but merely bids the servants do whatever He tells them, showing how well she knew her power over the heart of her Son.

Colloquy with Mary, the Woman of prophecy. Salve Regina, page 392.

MEDITATION X

THE MARRIAGE IN CANA OF GALILEE—II

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History, etc., as above.

FIRST POINT.—The miracle follows as a matter of course. Mary has spoken; the time at her word must be anticipated. At the sound of her voice St. John had been sanctified in the womb and had recognized his Redeemer. At the sound of her voice the Redeemer makes Himself known to all men by His first public miracle, although He has

just declared that the time of His manifestation is not yet come.

“Fill the water-pots with water.” Fill them with the tears of a humble and contrite heart, and those tears shall be changed into the all-atoning blood of Christ. “And they filled them to the brim.” Perfect obedience this; had they done less there would not have been so much wine. “Draw out and carry to the chief steward of the feast.” We know what he said when he had tasted that miraculous wine. He was not in the secret, but the waiters were, so it was not long a secret; and we can well imagine the joyful excitement and enthusiasm of that happy company, and how Our Lord’s compassionate kindness won their hearts to His teaching, and with what a full and fervent faith they believed in Him. “His disciples believed in Him,” says the Evangelist. Who would not be the disciple of such a master?

SECOND POINT.—Most of Our Lord’s miracles were wrought to meet some great necessity or relieve some terrible affliction. This on the contrary seems a slight occasion for so tremendous an exhibition of power. A little shame, a little inconvenience were the only evils to be removed, and He might have removed them without so astounding a miracle. That He worked it notwithstanding shows how gladly He condescends to help us even in our smallest needs. It shows also our

Lady's power with Him. The miracle, it is clear, would not have been granted but for her intervention; the occasion was slight, her prayer irresistible.

THIRD POINT.—This marriage-feast at Cana is an image of God's Church on earth; for the Church celebrates a perpetual marriage-feast, and Jesus and His Mother are always there, He with His omnipotent power as God, she with her omnipotent intercession as the Mother of God. In the image Jesus is the bridegroom's guest and the wine they drink is the juice of the grape; in the great reality Jesus is Himself the bridegroom and the wine He sets before His guests is the blood of His own veins. "A king made a marriage for his son and invited many." Blessed are they who are invited. Blessed are they who taste of this wine. Blessed are they for whom the Mother of Jesus pleads.

Colloquy with Jesus and Mary. Salve Regina, page 392.

MEDITATION XI

THE BUYERS AND SELLERS IN THE TEMPLE

Preparatory Prayer, as above.

History.—Jesus making a scourge drives the traffickers out of the Temple. The Jews then ask

Him for a sign of His authority and He appeals to His Resurrection. (*John* ii. 2.)

Mental Picture.—Christ with uplifted scourge and indignation in His face.

Petition.—The zeal of God.

FIRST POINT.—Those that sold sheep and oxen He drove away, and the tables of the money-changers He overturned; but to them who sold doves—these being for the poor—He only said: “Take these things hence, and make not My Father’s house a house of traffic. And His disciples remembered that it was written: The zeal of Thy house hath eaten me up.” This gross profanation which filled our Saviour with holy anger is far less distressing to Him than the defilement of our souls by sin. My soul is a far holier temple than that on Mount Sion, consecrated, not by the blood of goats, or of calves, but by His own blood” (*Heb.* ix. 12). Yet now, as then, though we have beaten Him with heavy whips, He makes a scourge of little cords; for in this life He chastises only that He may heal. Let me then humbly accept the gentle chastisements He inflicts on me “with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb unspotted and undefiled” (1 *Pet.* i. 19).

SECOND POINT.—“What sign dost thou show unto us, seeing that thou dost these things?” This question was reasonable enough. A reformer ought to offer some proof of his commission. So

long as man is what he is there will always be abuses to reform, and some will always be found who are ready to undertake the work. How, then, are we to know the false reformer from the true?

In two ways: 1. The false reformer is self-appointed. "They come to you," says Our Lord, "in sheep's clothing." They are not sent, but come of their own accord. The true reformer, on the contrary, is sent by God, or by God's representatives, and carries his commission with him. 2. The one is quite ready to teach what he has never learned, the other begins his reform with himself: "By their fruits you shall know them" (*Matt. vii. 16*). Let me learn from this never to set myself up as a judge in Israel. If I would make others better I must turn my attention first upon myself. An ounce of good life goes further than a ton of correction.

THIRD POINT.—Our Saviour's lofty teaching and stupendous miracles were the proof He meant presently to offer of His divine mission and authority, and it is to the greatest of all His miracles that He now appeals. "Destroy this temple," He says, meaning His own body, "and in three days I will raise it up." Yet even at that moment Christ was proving His mission under their very eyes by the mighty power He displayed. Fancy a crowd of greedy traders allowing themselves to be put to rout and the money they loved so well to be scat-

tered on the pavement by one man armed with a little whip! There was surely no need to prove that such authority came from God. I will rejoice in my Saviour's divine power, and gladly for His sake obey that holy Church to which He has left it.

Colloquy with Our Lord. The Creed, or Psalm xxv, page 388.

The Sermon on the Mount

MEDITATION XII

THE FIRST BEATITUDE

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—"And, seeing the multitudes, He went up into a mountain, and when He was set down His disciples came unto Him, and, opening His mouth, He taught them" (*Matt. v. 1, 2*).

Mental Picture.—Jesus on the Cross; for it is on Mount Calvary that He most effectively preaches His Gospel of peace.

Petition.—A heart ready to hear Christ's teaching and to put it in practice.

FIRST POINT.—"Blessed are the poor in spirit."—The poor in spirit are those who have no love for this world. Now, unworldliness is a very difficult science to master; for the world appeals to us in

so many ways. We turn from it; but it turns with us, and so we always find it facing us. Little ambitions spring up wherewith our hearts become entangled; affections for persons, for places, for occupations. We find ourselves constantly employed in cutting away new growths. We really wish to keep God always in view, to devote ourselves unreservedly to His service; but nature is too strong for us. We stick first on one side, then on another; our machinery is always getting clogged and our freedom of action impeded. Our good God, on His side, is for ever trying to wean us from the love of creatures, taking away now this, now that, stripping us by degrees of all that we love and cherish. And if we are wise we shall not resent this; for it is done with the sole object of drawing us to Himself by making us feel that in very truth there is nothing else worth loving. It is a painful discipline, but oh, how salutary to the soul!

SECOND POINT.—Our Lord's example.—He was poor and in labors from His youth (*Ps.* lxxxvii. 16). He did not seek His own glory nor do His own will: "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me" (*John* iv. 34). As for the world, hear what He says to His unbelieving brethren: "The world can not hate you; but Me it hateth, because I give testimony of it, that the works thereof are evil" (*John* vii. 7). To Pilate: "My king-

dom is not of this world" (*John* xviii. 36). To His apostles: "I am not of the world" (*John* xvii. 16). "If the world hate you, know ye that it hath hated Me before you" (*John* xv. 18). "Have confidence; I have overcome the world" (*John* xvi. 33). And to all of us He gives this solemn warning: "Lay not up to yourselves treasures on earth, where the rust and moth consume, and where thieves break through and steal" (*Matt.* vi. 19).

THIRD POINT.—The reward.—"For theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Not shall be, but *is*, and that in a twofold sense: 1. Through union with God—"For lo, the kingdom of God is within you" (*Luke* xvii. 21). 2. Because in their contempt for the transient things of time the poor have an earnest of the eternal joys of heaven, and can say with confidence: "Thy kingdom come."

But of the worldly-minded it is said: "Woe to you that are rich, for you have your consolation" (*Luke* vi. 24).

Colloquy with our Saviour. Act of Hope.

MEDITATION XIII

THE SECOND BEATITUDE

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History, etc., as in Meditation XII.

FIRST POINT.—"Blessed are the meek."—Meek-

ness is humility of heart showing itself outwardly in gentleness, patient endurance of contradiction and harsh treatment of any kind. Only the humble can practise this. It is pride that teaches us to stand upon our dignity, that makes us resentful and quarrelsome. To "turn the other cheek," to give the mild answer "that turneth away wrath" is not the fashion of the world, because the world is essentially proud.

SECOND POINT.—Our Lord's example.—There are only two virtues in Himself which Our Saviour expressly invites us to imitate. The first is charity: "A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another, as I have loved you" (*John* xiii. 34). The second is humility: "Learn of Me because I am meek and humble of heart" (*Matt.* xi. 29). Jesus, being most humble, was therefore most meek: "Who when He was reviled did not revile; when He suffered, He threatened not; but delivered Himself to him that judged Him unjustly" (*1 Pet.* ii. 23). "I have given my body to the strikers and my cheeks to them that plucked them. I have not turned away my face from them that rebuked me, and spit upon me" (*Is.* l. 6). How often in the Passion those words receive: "Jesus held His peace!"

THIRD POINT.—The reward.—"For they shall possess the land." Meekness, then, in God's dispensation is power. "The meek shall inherit the

land and shall delight in abundance of peace” (*Ps.* xxxvi). “He will exalt the meek into salvation. The saints shall rejoice in glory; they shall be joyful in their beds. The high praises of God shall be in their mouths: and two-edged swords in their hands: to execute vengeance upon the nations, chastisements among the peoples. To bind their kings with fetters, and their nobles with manacles of iron. To execute upon them the judgment that is written. This glory is to all His saints” (*Ps.* cxlix. 4). But the vengeance of the saints is that of their King: “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to Myself” (*John* xii, 32). The moral power of meekness is irresistible; the hardest heart must yield to it. Let me practise myself in the use of this potent weapon, and conquer others by conquering myself; for the proud and self-assertive are hateful both to men and to God, and have no part in His kingdom.

Colloquy with our Saviour. Act of Hope.

MEDITATION XIV

THE THIRD BEATITUDE

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History, etc., as in Meditation XII.

FIRST POINT.—“Blessed are they that mourn.”
—In this sad life we have abundant argument for

sorrow, and all sorrow is sanctifying, except that which despairs; for it softens and humbles the heart, teaches sympathy for others and prepares the way for grace. Sorrow for our sins and our proneness to sin, sorrow for the sins of others, sorrow for the triumph of evil, for the disappointments of life or the weariness of exile, sorrow, above all, for the sufferings of Him who died for us—all these give us a claim to this blessing.

SECOND POINT.—Our Lord's example.—He wept often; we are not told that He ever laughed. He is described by His prophet as "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with infirmity" (*Is.* liii. 3). In the garden His soul was "sorrowful even unto death" (*Matt.* xxvi. 38). "O all ye that pass by the way, attend, and see if there be any sorrow like to My sorrow" (*Lam.* i. 12).

THIRD POINT.—The reward. "For they shall be comforted."—This comfort will be given even in this world; for has He not said: "Come to Me, all you that labor, and are burdened, and I will refresh you?" (*Matt.* xi. 28.) And hereafter He has promised to "wipe away all tears from their eyes" (*Apoc.* vii. 17).

But "woe to you that now laugh; for you shall mourn and weep" (*Luke* vi. 25). "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (*Matt.* viii. 12).

Colloquy with our Saviour. Acts of Contrition and Hope.

MEDITATION XV

THE FOURTH BEATITUDE

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History, etc., as in Meditation XII.

FIRST POINT.—“Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice.” Justice is holiness, and to hunger and thirst after it is the surest sign we can have that God is with us. We can never in this life be certain that all will end well, because we ourselves are so unreliable; but this is the nearest approach to certainty we can make; for it shows that God’s grace is still flowing and that we are corresponding with it. Still, there are many degrees of hunger and thirst. Some, like holy David, pant for the living God as the hunted hart after the waterbrooks; others take it more quietly. So by the greater or less intensity of our desires we can measure our progress.

SECOND POINT.—Our Lord’s example.—Though He had sat down exhausted at the well of Sichar while His disciples went into the city to buy food, the conversion of the Samaritan woman so filled Him with joy and strength that when the disciples came back, saying, “Rabbi, eat,” His reply was, “I have meat to eat which you know not of” (*John* iv. 34). Again, on the eve of His Passion He ut-

tered these burning words: "With desire I have desired to eat this pasch with you before I suffer" (*Luke* xxii, 15). And His last sigh as He hung dying on the cross was still: "I thirst." What is my Saviour hungering and thirsting for? For my salvation, my sanctification. "For us men and for our salvation He came down from heaven." "Give me to drink," He cries (*John* iv. 10). How can I keep Him waiting so long?

THIRD POINT.—The reward.—"For they shall have their fill." They shall attain their desire. They shall draw near to God and God to them. He will take fuller and fuller possession of them, establishing His kingdom in their hearts. "Thy kingdom come"; this is what we want, that God's dominion over us may be supreme, unquestioned; and this will be in direct proportion to our longing for it.

But "woe to you that are filled; for you shall hunger" (*Luke* vi. 25). So the rich man in hell prayed that Lazarus might dip the tip of his finger in water to cook^{*} his parched tongue; for such is God's law. "He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He hath sent empty away" (*Luke* i. 53).

Colloquy with our Saviour. Acts of Hope and Charity.

MEDITATION XVI

THE FIFTH BEATITUDE

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History, etc., as in Meditation XII.

FIRST POINT.—“Blessed are the merciful.”—Our natural tendency, or rather the tendency we have acquired in our fallen state, is to be easy and indulgent with ourselves and severe on others. We forget how much we need mercy and what good reason we have to fear God’s justice; so we mete out justice without mercy to our brethren, sometimes downright injustice, and in this way lay up judgment for ourselves. Our good God has forgiven us a debt of ten thousand talents; yet we are ready to throttle our neighbor because he owes us a hundred pence. Let me bring myself to book and acknowledge with deep sorrow all my unkindness of thought, word, and deed. “If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged” (1 *Cor.* xi. 31).

SECOND POINT.—Our Lord’s example.—On the cross He prayed for those that crucified Him. All His life long He “went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the devil” (*Acts* x. 38). He still forgives in the sacrament of Penance, still goes about doing good in the Holy Eucharist, when taken to the sick and dying, when

borne in procession, lifted up in Benediction, given to each of us in holy communion or offered to His heavenly Father in Holy Mass.

THIRD POINT.—The reward.—“For they shall obtain mercy.” The best and speediest way to find mercy is to practise it in kind thoughts, kind words, kind deeds. “Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not and you shall not be condemned. Forgive and you shall be forgiven. Give and it shall be given to you; good measure and pressed down and shaken together and running over shall they give into your bosom; for with the same measure that you shall mete withal it shall be measured to you again” (*Luke vi. 37*). But “judgment without mercy to him that hath not done mercy” (*James ii. 13*). So to the just at the great judgment Christ will say: “Come, ye blessed of My Father . . . for I was hungry, and you gave Me to eat.” But to the wicked: “Depart from Me, ye cursed . . . for I was hungry and you gave Me not to eat” (*Matt. xxv. 34, 35, 41, 42*).

Colloquy with our Saviour. Acts of Hope and Charity.

MEDITATION XVII

THE SIXTH BEATITUDE

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History, etc., as in Meditation XVI

FIRST POINT.—“Blessed are the clean of heart.”
—It is not easy to keep a clean heart in an unclean world; yet the foes without us are not so formidable as those within. It is from our own concupiscence and curiosity that we have most to fear, and nothing short of a great and continued effort will keep them in subjection.

If we sincerely wish to be faithful we shall take to heart our Saviour’s warning: “Watch ye, and pray, that ye enter not into temptation” (*Matt.* xxvi. 41). We must watch over our senses, especially sight and touch; “for death cometh up through our windows” (*Jer.* ix. 21). We must be on our guard against bad company and bad reading; for if we think ourselves at liberty to go everywhere, to look at and read everything we shall not long remain innocent. And we must pray fervently and often; for only God can preserve us unscathed in the midst of this fiery furnace.

An ardent devotion to our Lady and to our Guardian Angel is, of course, a mighty protection, as also the habit of praying for those whose purity is endangered; for such prayer cannot fail to bring a blessing on oneself.

SECOND POINT.—Our Lord's example.—He “who feedeth among the lilies” (*Cant.* vi. 2) chose for Himself a virgin mother and gave her to the care of His virgin disciple. He showed a special love for little children, and would have all that love Him become like them; “for of such is the kingdom of heaven.”

Our sins of impurity caused our Saviour unthinkable anguish of soul and had to be specially atoned for by the scourging of His innocent flesh.

THIRD POINT.—The reward.—1. Health. “A sound mind in a sound body” is the formula of physical health, “A pure mind in a pure body” of spiritual health. But purity unquestionably promotes the well-being of the body as well as of the soul.

2. Strength, both physical and moral.

“My strength is as the strength of ten
Because my heart is pure.” (*Sir Galahad*)

3. Influence over others. Held precious and lovable on earth as in heaven, nothing gives so much moral power as chastity. “How beautiful is the chaste generation with glory! for the memory thereof is immortal because it is known both with God and with men. When it is present they imitate it, and they desire it when it hath withdrawn itself; and it triumpheth crowned for ever, winning the reward of undefiled conflicts” (*Wis.* iv. 1).

4. "For they shall see God" and that even in this life; for their faith will be more intense and their hearts more ready to respond to grace. So John was the first to recognize our Saviour when after His resurrection He stood by the lake of Tiberias. In the next life they shall see God in a way all their own, following "the Lamb whithersoever He goeth" (*Apoc.* xiv. 4).

But of the impure it is written: "Without are dogs and sorcerers and unchaste" (*Apoc.* xxii. 15).

Colloquy with our Saviour. Anima Christi, page 376.

MEDITATION XVIII

THE SEVENTH BEATITUDE

Præparatory Prayer, as before.

History, etc., as in Meditation XII.

FIRST POINT.—"Blessed are the peacemakers."
—We can exercise the office of peacemaker in two ways:

1. By reconciling man with man. "Three things," says Holy Writ, "are approved before God and men; the concord of brethren, and the love of neighbors, and man and wife that agree well together" (*Ecclus.* xxv. 1, 2). In promoting harmony, therefore, among those about us we do God's work in the world; for it is His desire that His

people should "sit in the beauty of peace" (*Is.* xxii. 18).

2. By reconciling man with God. As I live, saith the Lord, I desire not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live" (*Ez.* xxxiii. 11). "There shall be joy before the angels of God upon one sinner doing penance" (*Luke* xv. 10). He who causeth a sinner to be converted from the error of his way shall save his soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins" (*James* v. 20).

SECOND POINT. Our Lord's example.—He is called by *Isaias* "the Prince of peace." "Peace to men of good will" was the angels' song when He came on earth. "This is My commandment," He tells us, "that you love one another, as I have loved you" (*John* xv. 12). Through Him God has reconciled "all things unto Himself, making peace through the blood of His cross, both as to the things on earth, and the things that are in heaven" (*Col.* i. 20).

THIRD POINT.—The reward.—"For they shall be called the children of God"; that is, they shall be unspeakably dear to Him.

But of the disturber of peace between man and man we read: "Him that soweth discord among brethren God's soul detesteth" (*Prov.* vi. 19). And between man and God: "He that shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in Me, it

were better for him that a millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be drowned in the depths of the sea" (*Matt.* xviii. 6).

Colloquy with our Saviour. Agnus Dei.

MEDITATION XIX

THE EIGHTH BEATITUDE

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History, etc., as in Meditation XII.

FIRST POINT.—"Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake." By persecution we are to understand all sorts of injuries and afflictions, whether coming from men or evil spirits. "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 *Tim.* iii. 12). We must not bring them on ourselves by our sins or indiscretions; they must be for justice' sake, for love of holiness, in the cause of God. "Let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or a railer, or a coveter of other men's things; but if as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name" (1 *Pet.* iv. 15, 16). Perhaps I have deserved my sufferings. Even then I must bear them like the good thief with joy, or at least with patience.

Our Lord goes on to say: "Blessed are ye when they shall revile you, and persecute you, and speak

all that is evil against you, untruly, for My sake." This personal application of the Beatitude is perhaps meant to remind us that it is not enough to belong to a persecuted Church, but we must be prepared for persecution ourselves.

SECOND POINT.—Our Lord's example.—He was closely watched by His enemies, who laid snares for Him and tried to catch Him in His speech. He was charged with blasphemy, with having a devil, with working miracles by the help of the devil, and finally sworn to death by false witnesses. Moreover all the pain and shame of His passion was foreseen by Him in detail from the very beginning. "Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself was not for one hour of His life without the anguish of His passion. . . . The whole life of Christ was a cross and a martyrdom" (*A Kempis* ii. 12).

THIRD POINT.—The reward.—"For theirs is the kingdom of heaven." "Be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven." "Amen, amen, I say to you, that you shall lament and weep, but the world shall rejoice; and you shall be made sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy . . . and your joy no man shall take from you" (*John* xvi. 20, 22).

On the other hand, "if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ" (*Gal.* i. 10).

“Woe to you when men shall bless you” (*Luke vi. 26*).

Colloquy with our Saviour. Acts of Hope and Charity.

MEDITATION XX

THE APOSTOLIC OFFICE

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History, etc., as in Meditation XII.

FIRST POINT.—“Ye are the salt of the earth.”—Salt preserves from corruption. It is for Christ, says St. John Chrysostom, to sanctify men by His grace; our part is to preserve them from falling back into corruption. But in order to do this we must not lose our Savior. We must be pure and holy ourselves if we are to keep others pure and holy; and our holiness can be secured only by a personal and loyal devotion to Jesus Christ. “I am the vine; you are the branches. Without Me you can do nothing” (*John xv. 5*). “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh” (*Matt. xii. 34*). It is only when we are full of God’s love that we can impart that love to others.

SECOND POINT.—“Ye are the light of the world.”—“He that followeth Me, walketh not in darkness” (*John viii. 12*) implies the converse: He walketh in darkness who followeth Me not. The

world therefore is in darkness and loves its darkness "rather than the light" (*John* iii. 19). We have to spread the light and make men love it.

When a man takes a lantern into a dark cellar he can not see very much by reason of the deep shadows. His own body cuts off the light on one side; so he has to turn about, with the result that his lantern then leaves in darkness what was before in light. In the same way, if we are not holy we cut off the light of the Gospel we preach. The only way, then, to light up this dark world, to diffuse light into every corner of it, is to be a burning and shining light oneself, casting one's rays in all directions, like a lighthouse on a rock in mid-ocean. "So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven."

We must, therefore, turn to good account whatever talent God has given us. Some have more, some less; but all, if they choose, can have holiness and zeal, and these alone are essential.

THIRD POINT.—"Take heed that you do not your justice before men, to be seen of them; otherwise you shall not have a reward of your Father who is in heaven." The lesson taught here is purity of intention; we are to aim not at pleasing men, but God. So we are warned not to trumpet our alms, but to give so secretly that our left hand may not know what our right hand is doing. When we

fast we are not to draw a long face; when we pray we are to close the door and pray in secret, and our Father, who seeth in secret, will repay us. Yet we are to do all this without scrupulosity. There is a natural satisfaction in doing what we know we can do well. This is the very essence of the enjoyment we find in field-sports or anything else we throw our hearts into. The cricketer is elated when he makes a good hit or a sharp catch, not so much for the sake of the applause it earns as from his very delight in the game. No one cares for a game at which he feels he is a duffer. Yet, to secure ourselves against vanity and love of display, we must constantly raise our thoughts to God, offering all we do for His glory, taking disappointments and adverse criticism cheerfully, humbling ourselves, and being content to be held cheap, if it be for His greater honor.

Colloquy with our Saviour. Gloria Patri.

MEDITATION XXI

THE LORD'S PRAYER

(After the Second Method of Prayer)

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—This best of all prayers was taught us by Our Lord Jesus Christ, and we may well be-

lieve that He used it Himself; so when we say it we are praying with Him and in His own words.

Mental Picture.—Realize that God, with the whole court of heaven, is looking down upon you.

Petition.—"Lord, teach us to pray" (*Luke xi.* 1).

"*Our.*"—Jesus Christ would have each one of us invoke God, not as my Father, but as our Father, and that for several reasons:

1. To remind us that God is the creator and preserver of all things, visible and invisible, and so in a very real sense all creatures are our brethren, being all members of one great family. Therefore St. Francis of Assisi was wont to call the sun, moon, and stars, beasts, birds, and fishes his brothers and sisters.

2. To remind us that every human being is in a very special sense a son or daughter of God, being made in His likeness and being His adopted child through the brotherhood of Jesus Christ, "the first-born among many brethren" (*Rom. vii.* 29).

3. To remind us that, being brethren, we should love each other and pray with and for each other. And so all through this beautiful prayer we pray for others as well as for ourselves:—"Forgive us, deliver us," etc.

Even under the Old Law we find the prophet Malachias speaking thus: "Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us? Why

then doth every one of us despise his brother, violating the covenant of our fathers?" (*Mal.* ii. 10.) But Christ came to perfect the law of love, to give it so deep and wide a meaning that He could speak of it as something quite new and hitherto unthought of: "A new commandment I give unto you: That you love one another, as I have loved you, that you also love one another" (*John* xiii. 34).

To love as Christ loves us, this is indeed a new thing in the world, and John the beloved, is never weary of harping on this theme: "Dearly beloved, let us love one another; for charity is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is charity" (1 *John* iv. 7).

"*Fathers*"—God is our father in the order of nature.

1. By creation. Our bodies, indeed, are begotten by our earthly parents, though from God comes the life which parents transmit to their offspring; but our souls are in no way derived from father or mother; they are the direct product of God's creative power. Even the body, like everything else that exists, is formed under the hand of God. "Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh; Thou hast put me together with bones and sinews" (*Job* x. 11).

2. By preservation. The life God gave us at

the beginning He is giving still; we live because He lives in us. Every breath we draw, every step we take, every beat of our hearts we must attribute to Him. If He withdrew from us for one instant we should perish. "In Him we live and move and are" (*Acts* xvii. 28).

3. By the fatherly love—nay the maternal tenderness He feels for us; for the good God actually compares Himself to a mother. "Can a woman forget her infant, so as not to have pity on the son of her womb? And if she should forget, yet will not I forget thee. Behold I have graven thee in My hands" (*Is.* xlix. 15, 16). So David sings: "My father and mother have left me; but the Lord hath taken me up" (*Ps.* xxvi. 10).

"Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And not one of them shall fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore; better are you than many sparrows" (*Matt.* x. 29-31). In the supernatural order God's fatherhood is more wonderful still, for He has made us His children by adoption. "Behold what manner of charity the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called, and should be the sons of God" (1 *John* iii. 1). "And if sons, heirs also; heirs indeed of God, and joint-heirs with Christ" (*Rom.* viii. 17).

"*Who art in heaven.*"—Seeing that our Father dwells in heaven, heaven must be our home and

earth but an exile. "We have not here a lasting city, but we seek one that is to come" (*Heb.* xiii. 14); "the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem" (*Heb.* xii. 22). All our thoughts, therefore, all our desires, should turn heavenward; "for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (*Luke* xii. 34). "The time is short. It remaineth, that they also who have wives, be as if they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as if they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as if they used it not; for the fashion of this world passeth away" (1 *Cor.* vii. 29-31).

"Hallowed be Thy name."—That is, may Thy name be revered as holy by all Thy creatures. May that chant of the angels before Thy heavenly throne be taken up on earth: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts!" (*Is.* vi. 3.) May all those who are still in the darkness of infidelity come to know and worship Thy holy name, and may all Christians love it and do it honor by their lives; for "they who bear the name of Christians and live ill do a great wrong to Christ. Of them it is written that God's name through them is blasphemed. But if through such as these God's name is blasphemed, through the good His name is glorified; for, says the Apostle, 'We are the good odor of Christ in every place'" (*Aug. Tract.* 50

on St. John). "O Lord, our Lord, how admirable is Thy name in all the earth!" (*Ps.* viii. 10.) "I will be glad and rejoice in Thee. I will sing to Thy name, O Thou most high!" (*Ps.* ix. 3.) "Shout with joy to God, all the earth; sing ye a psalm to His name" (*Ps.* lxxv. 2).

"*Thy kingdom come.*"—We pray here for three things:

1. That God may establish His reign throughout the whole world, bringing all mankind to the knowledge of the truth and the love of holiness, uprooting paganism, heresy, and sin, beating down all the enemies of His holy Church, so that she may spread the Gospel in every land, and that there may be once more, as in days of old, one fold and one shepherd.

2. That God may come and reign supreme in our own hearts, subduing every unworthy passion and every revolt of self-love, so that with all our hearts and all our strength we may cleave to His law and yield Him an undivided allegiance.

3. That He may bring us all to that heavenly kingdom thrown open to us by the blood of His only Son, whose loving words we can never forget: "Fear not, little flock; for it hath pleased your Father to give you a kingdom" (*Luke* xii. 32).

"*Thy will be done.*"—Thy will, O Lord God, not mine; for mine is blind and foolish and easily led astray from the paths of true wisdom and peace;

but Thy will is infinitely wise and holy and therefore never changes, its aim being always one and the same: "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to men of good will."

This blessed will was the one thing Our Lord Jesus came on earth to do. "In the head of the book it is written of Me that I should do Thy will" (*Ps.* xxxix. 8). "I came down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me" (*John* vi. 38). Let us therefore learn to pray with our blessed Saviour: "Not my will, but Thine, be done"; for God's will is always best, and is sure in the end to bring about our happiness. "In regard to that little of thy will thou now willingly forsaketh thou shalt for ever have thy will in heaven" (*Á Kempis* iii. 49).

"*On earth as it is in heaven.*"—That is by men on earth; for everything around us *is* doing God's will: "Fire, hail, snow, ice, storming winds, which fulfil His word" (*Ps.* cxlviii. 8). "Thou hast founded the earth and it continueth; by Thy ordinance the day goeth on, for all things serve Thee" (*Ps.* cxviii. 90, 91).

The angels serve God with no pain, but with the purest joy, inanimate creatures with neither pain nor joy, those that have animal life sometimes with pain, at other times with joy. Man alone can combine pain and joy together, serving God cheerfully at his own cost, as St. Paul testifies that he

did: "I am filled with comfort; I exceedingly abound with joy in all our tribulation" (2 *Cor.* vii. 4). Man, when with all his heart he does God's will at the sacrifice of his own, yields Him a service which even the angels can not render.

"*Give us this day our daily bread.*"—In this petition we beg for daily sustenance, that, as the Church prays in her Litanies, God may "give and preserve the fruits of the earth," "Bringing forth grass for cattle, and herb for the service of men. That Thou mayst bring bread out of the earth, and that wine may cheer the heart of man" (*Ps.* ciii. 14, 15).

Yet we require a great deal more than this. "Not in bread alone doth man live, but in every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God" (*Matt.* iv. 4). As the body needs food, so the soul needs grace. Without grace we can neither resist temptation nor perform any good work that will be profitable for eternal life, and we need it daily, just as much as our bodily food.

Then again we may make this petition an act of spiritual communion, desiring to receive Our Lord in the Holy Eucharist, for He is the life of our souls. "I am the bread of life. If any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever. He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up in the last day" (*John* vi. 48, 52, 55).

"And forgive us our trespasses."—We all need God's forgiveness both for our own sins and for the sins we have caused in others. "Who can understand sins? From my secret ones cleanse me, O Lord, and from those of others spare Thy servant" (*Ps.* xviii. 13).

One single mortal sin deserves eternal separation from God. If, then, I have grievously offended my good God I ought never to forgive myself and never to weary of asking His forgiveness. "Wash me yet more from my iniquity; and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my iniquity, and my sin is always before me" (*Ps.* i. 4).

"As we forgive them that trespass against us."—*"For if you will forgive men their offences, your heavenly Father will forgive you also your offences; but if you will not forgive men, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you your offences"* (*Matt.* vi. 14, 15). Weigh these words well and you will see how terrible are the consequences of unforgiveness. You owe your lord ten thousand talents; your fellow servant owes you a hundred pence. As you treat him so will your lord treat you: "With what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again" (*Matt.* vii. 2).

If you do not forgive your neighbor then, or at least pray earnestly for grace to forgive him, it is very clear that in saying this petition of the Our Father you are calling down a curse upon your

own head; but if you are always ready to pardon others you can go to God with confidence, no matter what your sins may have been. What an easy way is this to obtain mercy! "Oh, blessed debt of my neighbor! oh, happy offence which I may urge before God for the remission of my own!" (St. Bonaventure, "Goad of Divine Love," iii. 14.)

If you still find it hard to forgive, pray for your enemy, force yourself to pray. There is no bitterness of heart that will long resist this treatment.

"*And lead us not into temptation.*"—Here we pray that God will not suffer us to be led into any temptation that is too strong for us, or, better still, will so strengthen us by His grace that we may triumph over it; for so long as we resist temptation it is an excellent thing for us. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he hath been proved he shall receive the crown of life which God hath promised to them that love Him" (*James i. 12*).

The Apostle goes on to tell us where temptation comes from: "Let no man, when he is tempted, say that he is tempted by God; for God is not a tempter of evils, and He tempteth no man. But every man is tempted by his own concupiscence, being drawn away and allured. Then, when concupiscence hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin;

but sin, when it is completed, begetteth death." Temptations, of course, may also come from the devil or from evil surroundings; but by far the greater number arise from our own unbridled desires, and, indeed, were it not for these, the world and the devil would have no power over us.

Therefore, "Watch ye, and pray, that ye enter not into temptation" (*Matt.* xxvi. 41). "He that thinketh himself to stand, let him take heed, lest he fall. Let no temptation take hold on you, but such is human,"—that is, arising from human frailty—"and God is faithful, who [so long as you do not thrust yourself into temptation] will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able, but will make also with the temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it" (1 *Cor.* x. 12, 13).

"*But deliver us from evil.*"—We here implore God's protection against all evils, both of soul and body, praying with Holy Church: "From all evil, from all sin, from Thine anger, from a sudden and unprovided death, from the snares of the devil, from anger, hatred, and all ill-will, from the spirit of fornication, from lightning and tempest, from the scourge of earthquake, from pestilence, famine, and war, from eternal death, deliver us, O Lord."

Yet, in sober truth there is only one real evil in all the world, and that one evil is sin. Sickness, pain of mind or body, pestilence, famine, death it-

self, are evils only inasmuch as they are the outcome and the penalty of sin. So it is above all from sin that we should pray God to deliver us, from our past sins with their fatal consequences, both in ourselves and in others, from our present attraction to sin and our future danger of it. Save me from sin, O my God; save me from an impenitent death and from eternal condemnation; and I care not what else befalls me. *Creed and Salve Regina.*

MEDITATION XXII

THE DEATH OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—King Herod had thrown John into prison because he declared it unlawful that the king should have Herodias, his brother's wife. During a banquet on King Herod's birthday the daughter of Herodias pleased him with her dancing, whereupon he swore to give her whatever she asked. At the instigation of her wicked mother the girl demanded the head of St. John, which was presently brought to her in a dish.

Mental Picture.—The lascivious dancing-girl receiving that sacred head, whose closed eyes, says St. Ambrose, refused to look upon the delights of a wicked court.

Petition.—Courage always to stand up for truth and holiness.

FIRST POINT.—Though Herod had imprisoned St. John to please Herodias he felt great reverence for him and took his advice on many things; but Herodias hated him with all the bitterness of her wicked and corrupt heart. She had long been trying to compass his death, and now the opportunity offers itself. She sends her daughter to dance before Herod, by this time excited with wine, and, being told of the king's promise, bids her ask for the head of her enemy.

In this wretched woman we see how one sin leads on to another. Living, as she was, in open and scandalous violation of the law of marriage, she was ready for any crime. May God in His mercy save me from becoming the slave of any strong passion; for there is no madness, no wickedness into which I may not then be led.

SECOND POINT.—Herod in his cups swore a foolish oath, little thinking what it would lead to. When the dancing girl took him at his word he ought to have refused to gratify her; but he was ashamed to break his oath before all his courtiers, and so out of mere cowardly human respect gave the order for St. John's execution.

How often we do wrong for the same reason! More than half the sins we commit are due to fear of men's ridicule or desire of their applause.

Let me brace myself up to obey my conscience in all things. The man of principle, who does his duty fearlessly and cares not what men think or say, has peace in his own soul, strengthens the weakness of others, who often enough want but a little encouragement to act bravely, and by his uprightness earns the respect of all.

THIRD POINT.—St. John stands out in glorious contrast to Herod as the fearless champion of God's cause in a wicked world—no need he to be shaken by the wind—and to Herodias, for there was no sensuality, no sin in him. His one ruling passion was a noble and generous devotion to his Master's service. And now this great lover of Christ, "the friend of the bridegroom," offers his neck gladly to the sword, closing his beautiful and unselfish life with a glorious death for God and His holy law. "Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake."

Let me, then, take heart of grace to stand up bravely for what is good and true. I shall never probably be called upon to shed my blood for Christ; but I shall have many an opportunity of making smaller sacrifices in His service. May He grant me something of the noble courage of His great Precursor.

Colloquy with St. John. Sume, Domine, page 398.

MEDITATION XXIII

THE STILLING OF THE STORM

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—While the disciples were crossing the lake Jesus fell asleep in the boat and a furious squall came on. In their terror they awoke Him, and with a word He stilled the storm (*Matt.* viii; *Mark* iv; *Luke* viii).

Mental Picture.—The little boat beaten about by wind and wave.

Petition.—Confidence in our Saviour.

FIRST POINT.—Our Lord fell asleep from sheer weariness; now He never sleeps: “Behold, He shall neither slumber nor sleep, that keepeth Israel” (*Ps.* cxx. 4). True, He sometimes appears to slumber; but if we call upon Him earnestly He will do what He has so often done before, command the wind and the waves, and there will be a great calm.

The real danger is that while Christ is watching we should fall asleep. When that comes to pass He will try to wake us up, saying, as to His disciples in the garden: “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.” But, like them, we may fall asleep again, and then we shall be in great peril; for though He is always at hand to

help us, He expects us to do our part in working the ship.

SECOND POINT.—“And they came to Him and awaked Him, saying: Lord, save us; we perish.” And some of them added: “Master, doth it not concern Thee that we perish?” How often have we done the same, though we know our Saviour’s power and mercy so much better than they did!

Julius Cæsar on a time, being in danger of shipwreck, bade the skipper of his vessel take heart; “for,” said he, “you are carrying Cæsar and his fortune.” Strange, then, would it be if we were afraid so long as Jesus Christ is on board our little craft. Only when we are in mortal sin can we have good reason to fear; for then He is not with us. “And Jesus saith to them: Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?”

THIRD POINT.—“And rising up He rebuked the wind and said to the sea: Peace; be still. And the wind ceased and there was made a great calm.”

Mark how all creation owns its Lord. “Who is this, thinkest thou; that both wind and sea obey Him?” Yes, it is only from us that Christ meets with resistance; everything else readily does His will. “For ever, O Lord, Thy word standeth firm in heaven . . . Thou hast founded the earth and it continueth. By Thy ordinance the day goeth on; for all things serve Thee” (*Ps.* cxviii. 89). “Fire, hail, snow, ice, stormy winds, which fulfil

His word'' (*Ps.* cxlviii. 8). The wayward heart of man alone maintains its independence and will not submit to His gentle law.

Colloquy with Christ. Act of Hope.

MEDITATION XXIV

THE FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—Our Saviour crossed the lake with His disciples to a desert place; but the crowd followed. He had compassion on them and spent the day in teaching them and healing their sick. When evening was come He fed them with five loaves and two fishes. (*Matt.* xiv, *Mark* vi, *Luke* ix, *John* vi.)

Mental Picture.—The moment before the miracle.—Our Lord on the hillside, with the apostles around Him and that immense crowd in the plain below.

Petition.—A strong faith in Our Lord's power and mercy.

FIRST POINT.—As the day wore on the disciples represented to our Saviour how great and hungry a crowd it was. "Give you them to eat," was His answer. "Two hundred pennyworth of bread," said Philip, "is not sufficient for them that every man may take a little." "How many loaves have ye?" asked Jesus. "Go and see."

So they went about among the people to see what they could find, and Andrew discovered a little boy who had in his satchel "five barley loaves and two fishes." This lad, no doubt, had been sent to market and, on his way home, falling in with the crowd that followed our Saviour, had forgotten all about his errand.

Jesus now sends the twelve down to the boat to bring up their fishing-baskets and presently we see them grouped about Him, each with his basket, the little lad standing in the middle with his satchel and that vast crowd looking up from the plain below and wondering what is to happen next.

I, too, am among the crowd, looking up to Jesus, waiting for the great gift whereof this bread is but a symbol, His own sacred flesh. Do I really feel hungry for that heavenly food? My desire is the measure of what I shall receive.

SECOND POINT.—"Make the men sit down; and they sat them down in ranks by hundreds and fifties." Doubtless this was by Our Lord's direction, to show us the advantage of method and organization; for no lasting good can be done unless it be done in an orderly way. Spasmodic work or work which has not been well thought out is doomed to failure. Method and forethought are indispensable.

Then comes the great miracle. Jesus blesses those loaves and fishes and puts them into the

baskets and the apostles go about distributing them to the multitude, nor are their baskets emptied till every one has had his fill.

Even so is the Holy Eucharist multiplied on the altar, each communicant receiving the body, the blood, the soul, and the divinity of the Lord Jesus.

Then, to emphasize the magnitude of the miracle and the princely munificence of His bounty, He bids them "gather up the fragments, lest they be lost"; and they fill the twelve baskets, one for each apostle, "with the fragments of the five barley loaves which remained over and above to them that had eaten."

THIRD POINT.—The whole story teaches us an unlimited confidence in Christ, the all-powerful, the all-generous, the all-pitiful. How can we help trusting such a master? "In a desert land, and where there is no way, and no water, so in the sanctuary have I come before Thee, to see Thy power and Thy glory. For Thy mercy is better than lives; Thee my lips shall praise. Thus will I bless Thee all my life long; and in Thy name I will lift up my hands. Let my soul be filled as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise Thee with joyful lips" (*Ps.* lxii. 3-6).

Colloquy with Jesus in the Tabernacle. Pange lingua, page 386.

MEDITATION XXV

CHRIST WALKING ON THE SEA

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—"The boat in the midst of the sea was tossed with the waves, for the wind was contrary. And in the fourth watch of the night He came to them walking upon the sea; and they were troubled, saying: This is an apparition; and they cried out for fear. And immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying: Be of good heart. It is I; fear ye not" (*Matt. xiv; Mark vi; John vi*).

Mental Picture.—A dark, windy night; the disciples toiling at the oars.

Petition.—Confidence in the divine power of Christ.

FIRST POINT.—After the feeding of the five thousand Our Lord, bidding His apostles take ship, dismissed the crowd and went into the mountain alone to pray. For whom was He praying throughout that wild night? For His disciples, no doubt out on the lake; but also for Holy Church, represented by St. Peter's storm-tossed boat, and for each one of us in all our tribulations and temptations. It was the never-ending prayer of the Good Shepherd, which began in the womb of His Mother and will end only with the last trumpet, when there will be nothing more to pray for, and

pleading will be turned into praise. In heaven, in the tabernacle, that prayer is always going on. Let us join our prayers with His, as the Church teaches her priests to do at the beginning of their daily Office: "In union with that divine prayer which Thou didst offer on earth I wish to recite these Hours."

SECOND POINT.—The apostles had put to sea very unwillingly. They had waited for Him till it was dark; "when evening was come the disciples went down to the sea." It was not far to the opposite shore; yet it was a treacherous little lake, liable to sudden squalls, when the winds swept down through the mountain gulleys, and now a strong head-wind began to blow.

It was not till the fourth watch of the night, or near dawn, that Jesus came to them; and when they saw Him walking on the waves they took Him for the wraith of the storm and cried out for fear. How often we, too, are afraid when Christ comes to us through the storm in the dark, dark night! We are ready enough to make fair weather with Him; but when His coming is on the rude waves of temptation and affliction we lose heart.

He had seemed to be passing by without noticing them; but now *immediately* He turns toward them, saying: "Be of good heart. It is I; fear ye not."

THIRD POINT.—And Peter said: "Lord, if it be

Thou, bid me come to Thee, walking upon the waters; and He said: Come. And Peter, going down out of the boat, walked upon the waters to come to Jesus." Peter's confidence in Our Lord's word was great, indeed; yet a minute later it failed him; for, "seeing the wind strong"—though he must have seen that before he left the boat, "he was afraid." This ought to remind each one of us how little he can rely on himself. Our moods are more variable than those of that wild mountain lake; at one moment we are full of fervor and courage, the next we are scared out of our wits. Let us at any rate, when we begin to sink, cry out with Peter: "Lord, save me!" "And *immediately* Jesus, stretching forth His hand, took hold of him and said to him: O thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt?" Mark how our dear Lord's readiness to help His servants comes out in this narrative. When He sees their terror He turns at once to reassure them; when Peter calls on Him at once He stretches forth His hand to lift him up. "And when they were come up into the boat the wind ceased, and presently the ship was at the land," though a moment before it was far out on the lake. "And they that were in the boat came and adored Him, saying: Indeed, Thou art the Son of God." Let us do likewise, and acknowledge that so long as Jesus is praying for us we have nothing to fear.

THE CONFESSION OF ST. PETER 265

Colloquy with Christ our Lord. Act of Faith, or Psalm cxx, page 391.

MEDITATION XXVI

THE CONFESSION OF ST. PETER

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—Christ asks His apostles what men are saying about Him and, when they have told Him, puts the question: “But whom do you say that I am?” Simon replies: “Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God” (*Matt. xvi. 16*).

Mental Picture.—The apostles grouped about our Saviour.

Petition.—Love for the Church and for the Holy Father.

FIRST POINT.—What did men think of Our Lord? Some thought He was John the Baptist risen from the dead; others said He was Elias, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. How was it they did not acknowledge Him as the Messiah? Because they were possessed with a fixed idea—we see it among the apostles themselves—that the Messiah was to be a great earthly king, to rule from the throne of David and Solomon and restore the lost glories of the Jewish race. They could not understand that His Kingdom was “not of this world.”

Are there not many men just as blind now, men who fancy that worldly prosperity is a sure sign of God's favor, that that nation is the chosen of heaven which has the widest dominion, the most thriving trade, the biggest army or the strongest fleet? "They have called the people happy that hath these things; but happy is that people whose God is the Lord" (*Ps.* cxliii. 15).

SECOND POINT.—To our Saviour's question, "Whom do you say that I am?" Simon answers: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Once before this Simon had declared Jesus to be the Son of God (*John* vi. 70); yet we may be quite certain that he meant then what he means now. The Jews, as we have already pointed out, seem to have used the term very much as we use "saint." Our Lord's reply shows that Simon has now risen to a height of faith he had never reached before: "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona, because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but My Father who is in heaven. And I (the Son of God) say to thee (the son of the fisherman): Thou art Cephas (the rock), and on this rock I will build My Church."

When Jesus first set eyes on Simon He had said: "Thou shalt be called Cephas (Peter)" (*John* i. 42). The time has now come to fulfil that promise; Peter has earned his name by this great act of faith.

Nor is it to be a mere empty title; for on him the Church, the one true Church, "My Church"—our Saviour knows but one—is to be built. Christ Himself is the builder, Peter the foundation on which He builds. Let us rejoice and give thanks for these mighty words which have made it so clear to men of good will where God's Church is to be found. "Where Peter is, there is the Church, and where the Church is there is no death, but eternal life" (Ambrose, on *Ps.* xl).

THIRD POINT.—"And the gates (the powers) of hell shall not prevail against it." They shall assail it, indeed, from without and within. There shall be persecutions both savagely cruel and diabolically insidious; there shall be heresies and schisms and shameless calumnies; there shall even be sad scandals and corruption in high places; but none of these shall avail to overthrow My Church. She shall vanquish her external foes and purge out the treason within and from every conflict come forth stronger.

"And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven," the power to open and to shut. "And whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." I will be with you in all your ways, so that your judgments may be the judgments of God and may never have to be reversed.

Let us thank our Saviour that we see the glorious fulfilment of these words and that we are members of this holy, indestructible, infallible Church of His.

Colloquy with Our Lord and St. Peter. The Creed.

MEDITATION XXVII

THE TRANSFIGURATION

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—Jesus is transfigured on the mountain, His face shining as the sun, His garments white as snow; and out of the bright cloud that surrounds Him a voice is heard saying: “This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Hear ye Him” (*Matt. xvii. 5*).

Mental Picture.—Our Lord in glory between Moses and Elias.

Petition.—Courage to carry the cross.

FIRST POINT.—Peter, James, and John, before whose eyes this glorious manifestation took place, were also to witness the agony in the Garden. The transfiguration was therefore intended:

1. To strengthen their faith by revealing the hidden Godhead.
2. To bring home to them the divine love which had hidden it so long.

3. To show how gladly our Saviour went to death, being offered up because it was His own will, whereas, without the help of "twelve legions of angels," He could at any moment, by unveiling His divinity, have cast His enemies in terror at His feet.

4. To prepare them for the indignities of the passion by pointing to the certainty of the Resurrection.

Let us, then, all feed our faith on the contemplation of our dear Lord's glory. The miracle is not that He shows it now, but that He has hidden it for so many years and will hide it again, giving Himself up to the savage cruelty of wicked men and suffering Himself to be put to a shameful death.

SECOND POINT.—When we compare this scene with those of Holy Week many points of similarity or contrast appear.

1. The three apostles were sleeping when the Transfiguration took place; they were sleeping also during our Saviour's agony.

2. Now they wake up to find their Master all glorious and shining from the light of the Godhead within Him; in the Garden they awake to see Him pale and exhausted and covered with a sweat of blood.

3. Now they are so overjoyed at the sight of His glory that they would fain stay here forever:

“Lord,” cries Peter, “it is good for us to be here.” In the Garden they are so terrified that they all forsake their Master, and Peter, who would have built the three tabernacles, denies Him three times.

4. Here He floats in a flood of splendor between Moses and Elias, the law and the prophets both bearing witness to His own heaven-sent Gospel. On the cross He hangs between two thieves, stripped of His garments and covered with blood, while the scribes and pharisees mock Him, saying: “This man calleth Elias. Let us see whether Elias will come to deliver Him” (*Matt.* xxvii. 47, 49).

5. Now the voice of the eternal Father comes forth from the overshadowing cloud, saying: “This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased.” On the cross it is the voice of the Son we hear crying out piteously: “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?”

THIRD POINT.—“And the disciples, hearing, fell upon their face and were very much afraid. And Jesus came and touched them, and said: Arise and fear not. And they, lifting up their eyes, saw no one, but only Jesus.”

This is what must happen sooner or later to each one of us. Whether we have loved this world or not, the hour is at hand when all sensible things will vanish from our sight, when all the interests

of time will be suddenly forgotten, when the crowded scene in which we now move and play our little part will fade away into infinite distance, when we shall wake up as from a dream and see "only Jesus." Our thoughts then will be very much what they are now when we make our thanksgiving after confession or kiss the cross on Good Friday; the same, but how far more intense! Then we shall feel as we never felt before that he alone is truly wise who holds all earthly things cheap and tries to do in this life what he must do at the moment of death and judgment, see Jesus and nothing but Jesus.

Colloquy with our glorified Saviour. Gloria in excelsis, page 380.

MEDITATION XXVIII

THE SONS OF ZEBEDEE

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—The mother of James and John comes with her sons adoring and asking something of Jesus; this is that they may sit one on His right hand the other on His left in His kingdom (*Matt. xx*).

Mental Picture.—Our Lord, knowing what is in their hearts, takes them apart from the others to hear their request.

Petition.—True humility.

FIRST POINT.—A moment before Jesus had been speaking of His passion; but He spoke to deaf ears; for it was a fixed idea in the Jewish mind that the Messiah was to be a mighty monarch like Solomon, and as the apostles were His chosen followers they looked to share in His glory and were always disputing who should be the greater among them.

This, then, is the request of the two brothers, that they may sit on either side of Christ in His kingdom. They know that they have been preferred before all the others, Peter alone excepted; what they now want is to get precedence of him. It all seems very trivial and unworthy; but it is human nature. I find the same petty ambitions in myself. How wonderful is our Saviour's patience with them and with me!

SECOND POINT.—“And Jesus answering said: You know not what you ask. Can you drink the chalice that I shall drink?” A striking commentary this on those wonderful promises to prayer: “Ask, and you shall receive, etc.” “Master,” they say, “we desire that whatsoever we ask Thou wouldst do it for us.” Is not this just what He assures us He will do? Yet now He replies: “You know not what you ask.” Evidently they are asking for the wrong thing, seeking in the wrong direction, knocking at the wrong door.

“Ask and you shall receive,” He tells us, “that your joy may be full”; that is, in all your petitions keep your salvation and eternal happiness in view.

Yet how sweetly He invites them to share in His sufferings! His question is not “Can you face death?” but “Can you walk in My footsteps, drink after Me?” “They say to Him: We can. He saith to them: My chalice, indeed, you shall drink; but to sit on My right or left hand is not Mine to give you, but to them for whom it is prepared by My Father.” He knows that later on they will become men of another mold and gladly face torture and death for His sake; all these worldly ambitions will then be laid aside; so He is content to wait for that hour. Shall I ever do anything heroic to make up for all my petty selfishness?

THIRD POINT.—Their fellow disciples “were moved to indignation against the two brethren,” thinking no doubt that they had been trying to steal a march on them. “But Jesus called them to Him and said: “You know that the princes of the gentiles lord it over them, and they that are the greater exercise power upon them. It shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be the greater among you let him be your minister, and he that will be first among you shall be your servant; even as the Son of man is not come to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a

redemption for many.' Let me take to heart this lesson in humility which my Saviour teaches me both by word and example. When my God stoops to be my servant, it is surely time for me to abase myself.

Colloquy with our humble Jesus. Anima Christi, page 376.

Our Lord's Mercy to Sinners

MEDITATION XXIX

MARY MAGDALEN

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—While Jesus sits at meat in the house of a pharisee Magdalen casts herself at His feet and bathes them with her tears. Our Lord, having defended her against the harsh judgment of His host, sends her away forgiven (*Luke vii*).

Mental Picture.—Magdalen sobbing her heart out at her Saviour's feet.

Petition.—True contrition.

FIRST POINT.—Magdalen was a notorious sinner and a cause of sin in others; but "blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered" (*Ps. xxxi. 1*). Great, indeed, were her iniquities, calling for a great chastisement or a great forgiveness; how were they to be covered? Yet covered they have been, and that so completely

that, when we think of Magdalen, it is not of the sinful woman of Jerusalem we think, but of the soul so dear to Christ, so highly favored by Him; not of the Magdalen out of whom He cast seven devils, but of the Magdalen who clung to the foot of His cross and wept beside His empty tomb. "Charity covereth a multitude of sins" (1 *Pet.* iv. 8). "Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much." This is how Magdalen's sins have been covered.

Her intention, when she entered the supper-chamber, was simply to anoint Christ's feet, and for this purpose, no doubt, she chose, as later on at Bethlehem, her most precious spikenard; but she no sooner found herself in His presence than grief swept over her soul like a tidal wave, her tears burst forth and she had to wipe them away as they fell with her long hair.

SECOND POINT.—Our Lord's entertainer, seeing this, said within himself: "This man, if he were a prophet, would know surely who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him, that she is a sinner." What a sorry mistake we commit when we sit in judgment on our neighbor! "I am not as the rest of men," said another pharisee; "I am not as this publican." "Judge not, and you shall not be judged; condemn not, and you shall not be condemned" (*Luke* vi. 37).

Our Saviour reads his thoughts, showing that

He knows his sins as well as those of Magdalen. "A certain creditor," He says, "had two debtors; the one owed five hundred pence, the other fifty; and, whereas they had not wherewith to pay, he forgave them both. Which therefore of the two loveth him most?"

If the pharisee owed fifty pence and Magdalen five hundred I must owe five thousand; for there is a wide difference between her sins and mine. She sinned before the Redemption. She did not know what I know of the love of Christ. She was not consecrated to His service by the sacraments, as I am. Yet the good Jesus has forgiven me.

THIRD POINT.—"Dost thou see this woman?" Our Lord went on. "I entered into thy house. Thou gavest Me no water for My feet; but she with tears hath washed My feet and with her hairs hath wiped them." Christ's feet, according to St. Augustine, are the poor. I will love the poor then, and labor for them. "Thou gavest Me no kiss." Dear Lord, I have kissed Thee, but how? Judas kissed Thee. Was mine, like his, the traitor's kiss.

"My head with oil thou didst not anoint." O my Saviour, I have sometimes anointed Thee with the oil of self-sacrifice; but was my oil, like Magdalen's, the best I had?

"Wherefore I say to thee: Many sins are forgiven her because she hath loved much." Our

Lord in His parable had implied the converse of this, that she loved much because she was so mercifully forgiven. Both are truths. We are first forgiven because we love, though it is God who awakes this love within us, and then we love more on finding ourselves so tenderly forgiven. Our Saviour, then, here indicates that mysterious interaction of the human will and the divine wherein God's grace is apportioned to man's correspondence with it.

"Thy sins are forgiven thee. Go in peace; thy faith hath made thee whole." How great a gift is a strong and living faith! Faith and love together secure for us that peace "which surpasseth all understanding" (*Philipp.* iv. 7).

Colloquy with Our Lord and Magdalen. Miserere, page 383.

MEDITATION XXX

THE SAMARITAN WOMAN

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—Jesus, passing through Samaria, rests by the well of Jacob and, conversing with a woman who comes to draw water, declares Himself to be the Messiah (*John* iv).

Mental Picture.—Our Lord sitting weary by the well, the woman standing before Him with her pitcher.

Petition.—That I may drink so deep of the living water Christ offers me as never to thirst again for the pleasures of earth.

FIRST POINT.—“Jesus therefore, being wearied with His journey, sat thus on the well. It was about the sixth hour.” Our Saviour here shows how truly He is one of us, a real man, sharing our hunger, our thirst, our fatigue—everything, sin alone excepted. Surely He hath borne our infirmities, and carried our sorrows” (*Is. liii. 4*).

“Not in vain is Jesus weary, He who is the strength of God, He from whom the weary draw refreshment, in whose absence we grow weary, whose presence makes us strong. Yet weary He is, weary from His journey; and so He sits weary by the well, and it is the sixth hour. . . . Christ is both strong and weak. The strength of Christ created thee; the weakness of Christ recreates thee. He built us up in His strength; in His weakness He comes seeking for us” (*St. Aug. Tract. xv, c. 4*).

“It was about the sixth hour,” the very hour when, at the end of His last journey, they nailed Him on the cross, that all wayfarers might sit weary by the well on Calvary and draw the waters of life from the fountains of their Saviour.

“There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus saith to her: Give Me to drink.” So on the cross He cried “I thirst”; but His bod-

ily thirst was nothing to that of His soul. His thirst is for the love of men; and I may slake Thy burning thirst, dear Lord, by giving Thee my love. Can I find it in my heart to refuse Thee?

SECOND POINT.—“Then that Samaritan woman saith to Him: How dost thou, being a Jew, ask of me to drink, who am a Samaritan woman? . . . Jesus answered, and said to her: If thou didst know the gift of God and who He is that saith to thee: Give me to drink, thou perhaps wouldst have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water.”

“If thou didst know the gift of God.” Alas! I do know it; yet how little value I have set upon it!

“The woman saith to Him: Sir, Thou hast nothing wherein to draw, and the well is deep; from whence, then, hast Thou living water?” Jesus answered: “Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again; but he that shall drink of the water that I will give him shall not thirst forever. . . . The woman saith to Him: Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come hither to draw.”

Let me join in that prayer. I am weary of drawing from the wells of this world; the water of grace is what my soul thirsts after. “Lord, give me this water.”

THIRD POINT.—Jesus then shows her that her

whole life is known to Him. "Our fathers," she tells Him, "adored on this mountain, and you say that Jerusalem is the place where men must adore." "The hour cometh," our Saviour replies, "and now is," when the true adorers shall adore the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem, but "in spirit and in truth. The woman saith to Him: I know that the Messiah cometh, who is called Christ; therefore when He is come He will tell us all things. Jesus saith to her: I am He who am speaking with thee. . . . The woman therefore left her water-pot and went her way into the city," saying to all she met: "Come, and see a man who has told me all things whatsoever I have done. Is not He the Christ?"

I, too, will leave my pitcher at the well; I have no further need for it. I have trudged there and back so often and to so little purpose. This fountain "that springeth up into everlasting life" will quench my thirst forever. To drink of it myself and to bring others to drink of it, to this I will devote all my life and all my labor. I pray Thee, dear Lord, let me give Thee to drink, and do Thou in return give me this living water that I may not thirst any more, nor come hither to draw.

Colloquy with Jesus sitting weary by the well.
Anima Christi, page 376.

MEDITATION XXXI

THE ADULTEROUS WOMAN

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—The scribes and pharisees bring to our Saviour a woman taken in adultery, hoping that His well-known pity for sinners may lead Him to commit Himself by giving a decision against the law (*John viii.*).

Mental Picture.—Jesus sitting in one of the Temple courts surrounded by a great crowd; the accused woman before Him covered with shame.

Petition.—Pity for sinners.

FIRST POINT.—“Master, this woman was even now taken in adultery. Now, Moses in the law commanded us to stone such a one; but what dost Thou say?” This is the accusation. It is apparently a clear case; yet mark how our Saviour deals with it.

“Jesus, bowing Himself down, wrote with His finger on the ground. When, therefore, they continued asking Him He lifted up Himself and said to them: He that is without sin among you let him first cast a stone at her; and again stooping down He wrote on the ground.” Such is the defence; for our merciful Redeemer, being called upon to act as judge, takes the part of advocate instead. “We have an advocate with the Father,

Jesus Christ the just" (1 *John* ii. 1). "I judge no man," He tells us Himself. The day will come when He shall judge the whole world; but till that day arrives He is our advocate, our defender, our confidential friend; and when we see how gently He treats this poor, crouching, shamefaced creature, dragged into His presence before all the people, with a score of fierce eyes glaring vengeance on her, how can we help trusting Him? Is He not in truth the Good Shepherd, the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world?

SECOND POINT.—"But they, hearing this, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest." Was Our Lord writing their own sins in the dust? It may well have been so; yet what He had said was enough to put them to shame: "He that is without sin among you let him first cast a stone at her." What a lesson for all of us!

There was no doubt as to this woman's guilt. If, therefore, even when our judgments are well grounded, we should remember our own sins and shrink from condemning, how doubly careful we ought to be not to condemn on insufficient evidence! We can not help condemning our neighbor's action if it is unworthy in itself; but as to his motives we should suspend judgment and leave him to God, making what excuse we can for him and, in one word, treating him as we should wish to be treated ourselves. How on earth can we venture to pass

sentence when we do not know the whole case? God alone can read the heart. Let us at any rate get the beam out of our own eye before daring to take the mote out of our brother's eye. "Judge not, and you shall not be judged; condemn not, and you shall not be condemned" (*Luke vi. 37*). Judge yourself, therefore; spare your brother, and then at God's judgment-seat it will go well with you.

THIRD POINT.—"And Jesus alone remained and the woman standing in the midst. Then Jesus, lifting up Himself, said to her: Woman, where are they that accused thee? Hath no man condemned thee? Who said: No man, Lord. And Jesus said: Neither will I condemn thee. Go, and sin no more."

We have heard the charge and the defence; this is the sentence, a merciful one indeed. The Gospel is full of evidences of Our Lord's divine compassion for sinners; but this is the most astounding of all. In Magdalen there was intense love and sorrow; in this poor woman we see no sign of either. Whatever sorrow she felt rose probably from no very lofty motive. She was filled with terror, no doubt, at the swift and awful judgment she had brought down upon herself, stricken with shame on finding her hidden sin dragged out into the light of day. Not a word did she utter in her own defence—how could she? Had she not been taken red-handed? So there she cowers at our

Saviour's feet, a trembling and convicted criminal, awaiting His condemnation, without a friend in all the world, without the smallest hope of forgiveness. No doubt His unexpected mercy awoke both love and grief in her soul; so He was able to send her away forgiven; but His divine pity was clearly beforehand with her. All this shows us how we ought to deal with the frail and fallen, not waiting for perfect dispositions, but seizing on any chance, however slight, of lifting them up to better things, "hoping all things, believing all things."

And then, for ourselves, what confidence in the loving heart of our Saviour must arise within us as we stand by and see how good and pitiful He is! "He shall feed His flock like a shepherd. He shall gather together the lambs with His arm and shall take them up in His bosom, and He Himself shall carry them that are with young" (*Is.* xl. 11).

Colloquy with our Good Shepherd. Anima Christi, page 376.

MEDITATION XXXII

ZACHEUS

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—Zacheus, being a little man and wishing greatly to see Our Lord, climbed a tree that he might have a good view of Him as He passed

by. Jesus rewarded him by becoming his guest (*Luke xix*).

Mental Picture.—Jesus bidding Zacheus come down.

Petition.—Holy desire.

FIRST POINT.—Our Saviour was passing through Jericho, where there lived a rich man called Zacheus, chief of the publicans or tax-gatherers employed by the Roman government. Whether he was a Jew or Gentile we are not told; but he seems to have heard of Our Lord's miracles, possibly also of His kindness to men of his own class, and he felt a strong desire to see Him. However, the crowd was great and Zacheus very small of stature; so, running on before, he climbed up into a sycamore tree that grew by the roadside.

For a rich man holding an important position to climb a tree by the public highway was certainly somewhat unusual and might well have brought endless ridicule upon him; but Zacheus seems not to have cared much what people would think or say. Most men in his station of life would have asked for an interview with the great teacher. Zacheus, however, was lowly of heart as well as of stature; so it did not occur to him to request so great a favor; but the little man's earnestness and humility could not fail to win him our Saviour's regard.

“And when Jesus was come to the place, looking

up, He saw him and said to him: Zacheus, make haste and come down; for this day I must abide in thy house."

SECOND POINT.—Zacheus, delighted at this unexpected condescension, "received Him with joy." But the publicans were hated by the Jews as agents of Roman tyranny, and indeed they were often guilty of extortion. When, therefore, it spread about that Jesus was to be the guest of Zacheus audible murmurs arose on every side; but Zacheus, unable to conceal his happiness at seeing Our Lord under his own roof tree and eager to show his gratitude, exclaimed: "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I (now) give to the poor, and if I have wronged any man of anything I (herewith) restore him fourfold."

Do I come anywhere near this? What portion of my income goes in charity? In the days of faith a tenth was considered a fair proportion, and such was the Jewish law of tithes. How many of us now-a-days give anything like a tenth to Church and poor? And when I have wronged another is not my conscience at rest as soon as I have given him back his own. Let me learn from Zacheus to be both just and generous.

THIRD POINT.—"Jesus said to him: This day is salvation come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham." This looks as if Zacheus was not a Jew; but, even so, he was a son of Abraham

all the same, because he had the faith and the large-heartedness of Abraham. "The Son of man is come to seek and save that which was lost."

The Jews were narrow and exclusive. They were the chosen people and all the promises were for them. Every one else was a Gentile. But Jesus Christ had come to break down this fence of exclusiveness and to save all mankind. The Church founded in His blood was to be the Church of all nations, of all classes and conditions of men; "Where there is neither Gentile nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian nor Scythian, bond nor free; but Christ is all, and in all" (*Col. iii. 11*). So the Good Shepherd finds His lost sheep, and we, His friends, rejoice with Him.

Colloquy with the Good Shepherd. Te Deum, page 399.

Our Lord's Mercy to the Sick

MEDITATION XXXIII

THE WOMAN OF CANAAN

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—A woman from the country of Tyre and Sidon pleads with Jesus for the cure of her daughter. He at first repels her, but presently grants her petition (*Matt. xv, Mark vii*).

Mental Picture.—The poor woman weeping at His feet.

Petition.—A humble faith.

FIRST POINT.—“Have mercy upon me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously troubled by a devil.” Such is her prayer; and it shows us that the Messiah was expected even among the Gentiles and that the fame of Our Lord’s miracles had spread far and wide. “Who answered her not a word.” It was not our Saviour’s way to show Himself indifferent to human suffering; but He knew the strong faith of this woman and He would have us know it, too; so He takes no notice of her. Yet she goes on entreating Him, till at last “His disciples came and besought Him, saying: Send her away, for she crieth after us. And He answering said: I was not sent but to the sheep that are lost of the house of Israel.”

Here Jesus appears to reverse His treatment of Zacheus. What He means is that His own personal mission is to the chosen people; the conversion of the heathen world being left to His apostles. However, He speaks thus only to bring out the woman’s faith and so lead up to a great act of mercy.

When in prayer my Saviour seems to turn away from me, like this poor pagan woman, I will pray harder than ever. I know too well that I deserve

this treatment. How often it was I who turned my back on Him!

SECOND POINT.—“But she came and adored Him, saying: Lord, help me. Who answering said: It is not good to take the bread of the children and to cast it to the dogs.” Strange words these in the mouth of the all-merciful, of Him who said: “Come unto Me, all you that labor and are burdened.” But the good Jesus knows well what grace is doing in that afflicted heart. “He needed not that any should give testimony of man; for He knew what is in man” (*John* ii. 25). A weak soul He would not have put to such a severe test; but here is a faith to move mountains. I will pray for a faith like this, so that I may be able to say with Job: “Although He should kill me, I will trust in Him” (*Job* xiii. 15).

THIRD POINT.—“But she said: Yea, Lord, for the whelps also eat of the crumbs that fall from the table of their masters.” This is humility, indeed. She accepts Our Lord’s description of her. She is but a dog; yet she begs for the scraps which are thrown to the like of her. And so her trial ends in victory; for God can refuse nothing to a faith so strong and lowly. “O woman, great is thy faith. Be it done to thee as thou wilt. And her daughter was cured from that hour.”

I, too, am but a dog, a very cross-grained dog, too; how often have I bitten the hand that fed

me! Yet my God has treated me as one of His children.

Colloquy with our Saviour. Acts of Faith and Hope.

MEDITATION XXXIV

THE CENTURION'S SERVANT

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—The centurion's favorite servant was dying; so through the Jewish elders of Capharnaum he besought Jesus to come and heal him; but hearing that Our Lord was on the way to his house, he first sent his friends and presently followed himself, saying that he was not worthy to receive Him under his roof (*Matt. viii; Luke vii*).

Mental Picture.—The Roman soldier standing uncovered before our Saviour.

Petition.—A humble faith.

FIRST POINT.—This centurion was one of those well-disposed pagans who had come to a knowledge of the true God through long residence in Palestine or intercourse with Jews in other parts of the world. He had prepared the way for the great grace now to be shown him by being kind to God's people, and had actually built them a synagogue.

Jesus, at the earnest entreaties of the ancients, at once went with them; but, as they drew near the house, He was met by the centurion's friends, bringing this message: "Lord, trouble not Thyself; for I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof. For which cause neither did I think myself worthy to come to Thee; but only say the word and my servant shall be healed." Whilst they were yet speaking the centurion appeared, himself repeating the same words.

And these words of his, so full of humble faith, God's Church has made her own, enshrining them in her sacred liturgy. From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same, wherever the great sacrifice of Christ's body and blood is offered, this Roman soldier's humble prayer is repeated: "Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof; but only say the word and my servant shall be healed."

SECOND POINT.—The elders, pleading for their friend, had urged: "He is worthy that Thou shouldst do this for him." "Lord, I am not worthy," says the centurion himself. Yet he is convinced that one word from Our Lord's mouth will heal his servant; and he gives this reason for his confidence: "I also am a man subject to authority, having under me soldiers; and I say to this man, go, and he goeth, and to another, come, and he cometh, and to my servant, do this, and he

doeth it." So canst Thou, O Lord, he means, having all power, command this sickness, and it will depart.

Jesus is said to have marveled when He heard these words, and we, too, may well marvel, for most men are puffed up by wielding authority over others, whereas this centurion is only the more lowly of heart. "Amen, I say to you," says the Lord, "I have not found so great faith, not even in Israel."

THIRD POINT.—Our centurion was evidently a good master and had, as he deserved to have, good servants, who did exactly and at once whatever he told them. How did he secure such ready obedience? In two ways:

1. He knew how to obey in his turn. His command was a century, or a hundred men, and there were higher officers over him. "I am one under authority and (i.e. therefore) I say to this man, go, and he goeth," etc. He who knows not how to obey knows not how to command. Obedience is for the obedient.

2. He loved his servants; they were precious to him; when they fell sick he did not discharge them, but took assiduous care of them.

A master, then, if he would have good and willing servants, must set them an example by himself obeying the laws of God and His Church. He must also watch over them, keep them from temp-

tation, give them good counsel, see that they have time to practise their religion, in a word, treat them, as our Catholic forefathers did, very much as his own children.

And a servant, if he would deserve a good master, must bear an honest heart, a ready hand, a prudent tongue, and in his master see Jesus Christ, who for our sake “took the form of a servant,” coming not to be ministered to, but to minister.”

Colloquy with Jesus Christ. Lord, I am not worthy, etc.

MEDITATION XXXV

THE WOMAN WITH THE ISSUE OF BLOOD

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—As Our Lord was on His way to the house of Jairus this woman came behind Him and, touching the hem of His garment, was immediately healed (*Matt. ix, Mark v, Luke viii*).

Mental Picture.—The woman trembling with fear at Christ’s feet.

Petition.—To know how to touch Jesus.

FIRST POINT.—For twelve years this woman had suffered from her painful disease, spending all she had on physicians, but to no purpose; yet she

felt sure that if she could but touch the hem of Our Lord's garment she would be made whole.

The world is full of poor sufferers like her who can expect no relief from human remedies. Most of us have some lifelong trouble of one kind or another. Why not turn, as she did, to Him "who went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the devil"? It may, indeed, be His will to leave us to bear our burden; but He knows how to make it bearable and even sweet. If in all our troubles we threw ourselves on His divine compassion our lives would be far happier than they are.

SECOND POINT.—"And immediately the issue of her blood stopped. And Jesus said: Who is it that touched Me? . . . Master," said Peter, "the multitudes throng and press Thee, and dost Thou say: Who touched Me? And Jesus said: Somebody hath touched Me; for I know that virtue is gone out from Me."

Our Saviour often enjoined silence on those whom He healed; but there was a special reason for acting differently in this case. He knew, though the father did not, that the daughter of Jairus was already dead. The poor man's faith would therefore want strengthening, to enable him to believe that she could be brought to life again.

At the same time He would have us all learn how to touch Him so that virtue may go out of

Him; for there are always many in the surging crowd around that touch Him without any benefit to themselves. We must draw near, therefore, with faith and confidence in His power and mercy, a deep sense of our own misery and our great need of Him; and then, while we touch His garment, we shall also touch His heart. A helpful thought this, for holy communion.

THIRD POINT.—“And the woman, seeing that she was not hid, came trembling and fell down before His feet and declared before all the people for what cause she had touched Him and how she was immediately healed.” She was afraid, poor thing! that Our Lord was offended at the liberty she had taken and would perhaps punish her by letting her malady return. This shows that her notions were somewhat confused; for she seems to have fancied that her cure had been effected without His knowledge or consent. Jesus, however, was far from being angry. “Daughter,” He said gently, “thy faith hath made thee whole. Go in peace.”

We have no reason, then, to be afraid of touching our Saviour; yet some people abstain for a long time from holy communion because they think themselves unworthy. Of course they are unworthy in one sense—an archangel would be so; but if they come with a good will and are free from mortal sin the Pope, who knows best, says

that they are worthy. Holy communion is not the reward of virtue, but the cure for sin. "They that are whole, need not the physician; but they that are sick" (*Luke* v. 31). So let them come, even though, like this poor woman, they come trembling, and, like her, declare everything to the good Jesus. Has He not said: "Come to Me, all ye that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you?"

Colloquy with Jesus merciful. De Profundis, page 382.

MEDITATION XXXVI

THE MIRACLE AT THE PROBATICA POOL

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—"An angel of the Lord descended at certain times into the pond, and the water was moved; and he that went down first into the pond after the motion of the waters was made whole of whatsoever infirmity he lay under." Jesus found a man there who was unable to get down to the water. "Arise," He said, "take up thy bed, and walk" (*John* v. 1).

Mental Picture.—Jesus bending down, full of compassion, over the sick man.

Petition.—Patience under affliction.

FIRST POINT.—Eight-and-thirty years this man

had borne his infirmity. The fact that our Saviour selected him out of that great crowd of sufferers seems to show that he was singularly patient under his heavy cross, and we can almost detect this in his own words; for in reply to Our Lord's question: "Wilt thou be made whole?" he says very simply and without the least sign of complaint: "Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pond; for whilst I am coming another goeth down before me."

Is this my way? Do I suffer without complaining, taking sickness and other painful things as visitations from God? Well, it is just when we have "no man" to help us that God is most ready to come to our aid. "Jesus saith to him: Arise; take up thy bed and walk"—by his bed we must understand a piece of matting. "And immediately the man was made whole, and he took up his bed and walked."

SECOND POINT.—"And it was the Sabbath day." The priests therefore reprov'd him for carrying his bed on the Sabbath; but when asked who had ordered him to do so he was unable to tell them.

Later on he came to inform them that it was Jesus who had made him whole, thinking, no doubt, that they would share in his own feelings of wonder and gratitude; instead of which they were filled with anger. But Jesus said to them: "My Father worketh until now, and I work." Then in

the wonderful discourse that follows He claims distinctly to be the Son of God, appealing in evidence to the miracles He has already wrought, promising greater wonders still in the raising of the dead, and finally declaring that He will come at the last day to judge the world.

They grasp His meaning well enough. He tells us, say they, "that God is His Father, making Himself equal to God." The proofs He appeals to are before their eyes; but, like their fathers of old, they harden their hearts; and, as God had said then: "These men have not known My ways; so I swore in My wrath that they should not enter into My rest" (*Ps. xciv. 11*). So does Christ say now: "You will not come to Me that you may have life. . . . But I know you, that you have not the love of God in you."

I will pray earnestly for all who, like these scribes and pharisees, resist the known truth, and for myself and all the faithful, that we may cleave to it with our whole hearts.

THIRD POINT.—The sick man after his cure goes into the Temple to return thanks to God, and our Saviour, finding him there, gives him this solemn warning: "Behold, thou art made whole. Sin no more, lest some worse thing happen to thee."

Sickness may or may not be the result of criminal indulgence; but whether we have brought it on ourselves or no we should take it as a merciful

dispensation of God, meant to promote our salvation and sanctification. How often has sickness saved a soul that but for it would have been lost! There is a worse thing, then, than bad health or any temporal affliction. "From all sin, deliver us, O Lord. From eternal death, deliver us, O Lord."

Colloquy with Jesus, the Son of God. Acts of Faith and Contrition.

MEDITATION XXXVII

THE LEPER

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—A leper, seeing Jesus passing by, cast himself on his face before Him, crying out: "Lord, if Thou wilt Thou canst make me clean. And Jesus, stretching forth his hand, touched him, saying: I will. Be thou made clean" (*Matt.* viii; *Mark* i; *Luke* v).

Mental Picture.—Our Saviour bending down to touch the leper.

Petition.—A great dread of the leprosy of sin.

FIRST POINT.—Leprosy is a virulent and loathsome disease which, attacking first the extremities, slowly eats away the features and limbs, till nothing is left save "the butt-ends of humanity." This poor creature, St. Luke tells us, was "full of

leprosy," that is, in an advanced stage of the disease. He has heard of Jesus of Nazareth and His superhuman power over every form of misery and, being strong in faith, he seizes an occasion when Our Lord is alone with His disciples and throws himself upon His mercy.

Now leprosy is the type of sin; for habits of sin eat away all the strength and comeliness of the soul and are beyond the reach of human skill; God alone can cure them. If we could only see a soul defiled with mortal sin we should turn sick with horror. May God grant me to realize this truth.

SECOND POINT.—Compare Our Lord's answer with the leper's prayer: "If Thou wilt"—"I will"; "Thou canst make me clean"—"Be thou made clean"; showing how infinite power and mercy are combined in Him, and how both are at our service so soon as we honestly desire and humbly invoke their aid.

But Jesus, not content with words, stretching forth His hand, touches the leper, consecrating thereby both the sacramental system of His Church, wherein grace is conferred by means of external signs, and also all those countless deeds of heroic charity and Christian pity toward the poor and the afflicted of which in every age she has been so prolific. No wonder, after this, that

in the ages of faith lepers were cared for so lovingly; no wonder they were called "the good folk, the good God's dear poor," and the like; no wonder St. Francis, St. Louis, St. Elizabeth, and other fervent lovers of Christ built hospitals for them and nursed them with their own hands; no wonder that our Saviour sometimes rewarded the love of His servants for these poor sufferers by Himself taking the form of a leper and allowing Himself to be attended by them.

My Lord's sweet mercy in touching the loathsome sores of this poor leper should encourage me to show practical compassion to my afflicted brethren; not to shrink from them and leave others to look to their wants; but gladly to serve them with my own hands.

THIRD POINT.—Our Lord then bade the leper go and show himself to the high priest and make his offering according to the law; but he was to tell no one the manner of his cure. However, the poor man's gratitude to his benefactor was so great that he could not keep silent, but "began to publish and to blaze abroad the word."

Do I show anything like this appreciation of God's mercy in cleansing my soul of sin? The cure of a bodily ailment would make me grateful enough; indeed, I remember all my life long much smaller favors than that; but the maladies of my

soul afflict me so little that I soon forget what I owe to God for removing them.

Colloquy with the good Jesus. Miserere, page 383.

MEDITATION XXXVIII

THE LEGION OF DEVILS

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—And when He came to land there met Him a man with an unclean spirit, naked, with no home save the tombs; so fierce and terrible that no one dare pass that way; nor could any man bind him, for, having been often bound with fetters and chains, he had burst the chains and broken the fetters in pieces; and he was always day and night in the monuments, crying out and cutting himself with stones (*Matt. viii; Mark v; Luke viii*).

Mental Picture.—The poor demoniac cringing before the Saviour.

Petition.—An intense horror of the sins of the flesh.

FIRST POINT.—“An unclean spirit.”—What a fearful picture have we here of the sensual man! “Naked”—lost to all sense of decency; for lust, like drink, destroys every instinct of self-respect. “Cutting himself with stones”; doing himself irreparable injury both in body and soul; a terror

to every one else, for no one can come near him with safety. The fetters and chains of law, human or divine, are of no force to bind him; he breaks them all.

But now, against his will, or rather against the will of the evil spirit within him, he is drawn to our Saviour's feet. "Go out of the man, thou unclean spirit." At that command he falls down and adores his God in the flesh, saying: "What have I to do with Thee, Jesus, Son of the most high God? Art Thou come hither to torment me before the time? I adjure Thee by God not to torment me." "What is thy name?" asks Our Lord. "My name is Legion," is the answer; "for we are many."

SECOND POINT.—Then they besought Him not to send them "into the abyss." The devils carry hell about with them; yet, just as we find a relief in walking up and down when we have a toothache, so, it would seem, these demons find a kind of solace in going about among men, their accursed occupation of tempting and seducing the sons of Adam helping them to endure the fearful tortures within. They dread to be sent back to their infernal dungeon; so they beg to be allowed to go into the swine feeding on the hillside. The permission is given; whereupon the whole drove rushes madly into the sea.

At first sight it may seem strange that Our Lord

should have allowed such a heavy loss to fall on those to whom He had come to preach the good tidings of salvation; but it was meant, no doubt, to show us how little temporal affliction is in God's sight. The eternal is everything, the temporal nothing. Let me school myself to take that view of all the troubles and disappointments of life.

THIRD POINT.—The swineherds carry the news into the town, and presently the citizens come out beseeching Our Lord to depart from them. He does so at once without a word. But oh, the folly of it! What blessings these short-sighted people were throwing away! The temporal loss they had suffered was a heavy one, it is true; but we know how our Saviour would have made up for it. How often have I acted in the same way, preferring the temporal to the eternal, and so perhaps losing both, failing to see that by bearing my sufferings graciously I draw down God's favor on myself! These men had before their eyes a striking evidence of Christ's beneficence. There was that terrible demoniac sitting at the feet of his benefactor, clothed and in his right mind; yet, for all that, they are mad enough to ask Jesus to leave them.

Then, mark Christ's compassion. He will go, indeed, as they wish it; but He will leave His blessing behind Him. The poor demoniac, full of gratitude, begs to be allowed to accompany his bene-

factor; he is told rather to go and spread among his people the news of the great mercy bestowed on him.

Colloquy with Jesus, "Son of the most high God." *De Profundis*, page 382.

MEDITATION XXXIX

THE TWO BLIND MEN OF JERICHO

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—Two blind men receive their sight at Jericho, one as our Saviour is entering the city (*Luke xviii*), the other as He is leaving it (*Mark x*); *St. Matthew* (xx) makes one story of the two events.

Mental Picture.—A blind man being brought up through the crowd to where Jesus is standing.

Petition.—To make good use of God's grace.

FIRST POINT.—Graces never come single; such at least is not God's will. If they do it is our fault; for they are meant to be linked on one to another, till they form a chain to draw us up to heaven. There is another chain which drags men down to hell, the chain of unfaithfulness, fashioned, link after link, just in the same way.

In this blind man, as in the good thief, we can almost see the forging of the chain; for, though the internal graces escape our detection, we can see

the actions which constitute these external graces and the response with which each is met. Jesus chose that road and that very hour because He knew this blind beggar was then sitting by the wayside. This was the first grace. Now note what followed:

1. The blind man, hearing the noise of the crowd, "asked what this meant. They told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by."

2. "He cried out, saying: Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me."

3. "They rebuked him that he should hold his peace; but he cried out much more."

4. He came to Jesus and laid his misery before Him.

5. He was cured and followed Him magnifying God.

What if he had asked no question? What if he had not cried out? What if he had allowed himself to be silenced? Then he would have been blind for the rest of his life; for Jesus never passed through Jericho again.

SECOND POINT.—Mark how our Saviour deals with him. 1. On hearing him cry out He stands still. Why does He not go forward and lay His hands on his eyes? He has often done so before; why not now? Because He would teach us that in order to profit by His grace we must not be merely passive, but must do something for ourselves.

2. "He commanded him to be brought unto Him," to show us, in the first place, that we should allow ourselves to be guided in the way of salvation, should listen to advice and not get angry when it is offered, and, in the second, that it is our duty and our privilege to help others to come to Christ.

3. "And when he was come near He asked him, saying: What wilt thou that I do to thee?" for, though He knows all our needs, He would have us declare them. "Ask, and you shall receive."

THIRD POINT.—This blind man after his cure seems to have related his good fortune to a friend of his, also blind, whose name was Bartimaeus; so Bartimaeus resolved to wait for Jesus as He left Jericho and do exactly what his friend had done. The first grace, therefore, in his case was the story of the other's cure and, as with sincere faith he corresponded with it, he deserved that our Saviour should fall in with his plan. So he, too, cried out: "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me," and Our Lord, as before, stood still. The bystanders tried to silence Bartimaeus; but he cried out all the louder, and when he heard them say: "Be of better comfort; arise, He calleth thee," so overjoyed was he at the success of his device that, "casting off his garment, he leapt up and came to Him." So he also was healed. And the prayer of both these blind men was, as we might expect,

one and the same: "Lord, that I may see." That prayer I will make my own. Open my eyes, dear Lord, that I may see the hidden workings of Thy grace in my soul, that I may understand what I have to do that this golden chain may not be broken; how I must watch for the first grace of each series, and accept it when it comes; for if I am faithful to the first I shall most likely be faithful to the second, and to all that follow; but if I am unfaithful to the first it will not be followed by a second, and then Jesus of Nazareth will pass by and leave me.

Colloquy with Jesus, the light of the world. Veni, Sancte Spiritus, page 400.

MEDITATION XL

THE MAN BORN BLIND

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—Our Lord gives sight to a man who has been blind from his birth. The Jews, therefore, because he stands stoutly to the truth of his story, excommunicate him. Jesus then makes Himself known to him as the Son of God (*John ix*).

Mental Picture.—"And falling down he adored Him."

Petition.—Courage in professing the Faith.

FIRST POINT.—“Rabbi,” said the disciples, “who hath sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind? Jesus answered: Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.”

Were it not for sin there would be no suffering in this world at all; yet it does not follow that every affliction is a punishment for the sins of him who has to bear it. We do well to offer up all our crosses in atonement for past offences; yet we may take comfort in the thought that by enduring them well we give great glory to God and draw down His best blessings upon ourselves.

“I must work the works of Him that sent Me whilst it is day. The night cometh when no man can work.” Is not this true of me also? Have not I been sent into the world to do a work for God, and is not the day of life wearing away and the night of death drawing nearer and nearer? It is time to be up and doing.

“As long as I am in the world I am the light of the world.” Dear Lord, give me grace to walk by Thy light and to be myself a light to those around me.

SECOND POINT.—“When He had said these things He spat on the ground and made clay of the spittle and spread the clay upon his eyes, and said to him: Go, wash in the pool of Siloe. . . . He went, therefore, and washed and came seeing.”

Now it was the Sabbath day. The man was therefore brought before the pharisees, and when he had told his story a division arose among them, some saying "This man is not of God who keepeth not the Sabbath," others asking "How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles?"

The man who had been cured was made to tell his tale over again and then his parents were summoned; but they were afraid of the priests, so they left their son to speak for himself. This he did with dauntless courage. "From the beginning of the world," he said, "it hath not been heard that any man hath opened the eyes of one born blind. Unless this man were of God he could not do anything." Enraged by these words the pharisees cast him out of the synagogue.

Is this the way I stand up for what is good and true? Do I never act against my conscience from fear of ridicule or the adverse judgments of men? Am I fearlessly honest, always staunch to my principles and my Faith?

THIRD POINT.—This excommunication was a terrible penalty. "Jesus heard that they had cast him out and when He had found him He said to him: Dost thou believe in the Son of God? He answered and said: "Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him? And Jesus said to him: "Thou hast both seen Him and it is He that talk-

eth with thee. And he said: I believe, Lord; and falling down he adored Him.”

I also believe in Thee, dear Saviour; I also adore Thee. Make me staunch and fearless in my loyalty to Thee and Thy holy Church, ready to suffer for Thy sake, a Catholic, not only in profession, but in very deed and truth.

Colloquy with Jesus, the light of the world. Veni, Sancte Spiritus, page 400.

MEDITATION XLI

THE PARALYTIC

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—By reason of the crowd about the house where Christ is teaching, a sick man has to be let down through the roof. Jesus forgives his sins, and then, in proof of His authority to do so, heals his bodily infirmity also.

Mental Picture.—The crowded chamber, the throng without, the sick man lying before our Saviour.

Petition.—Heartfelt gratitude for the great sacrament of Mercy, and grace to value the health of the soul above that of the body.

FIRST POINT.—The friends of this paralytic are very much in earnest. Being unable to force their

way through the crowd, they go up, with the consent no doubt of the sick man himself, on to the flat roof of the house and, taking off the tiles, let him down with ropes at our Saviour's feet.

Our Lord's first words show how this faith pleased Him: "Be of good heart, son; thy sins are forgiven thee." Some of the scribes and pharisees who were present said in their hearts: "He blasphemeth. Who can forgive sins but God only?" But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said to them: "Why do you think evil in your hearts? Whether is easier to say: Thy sins are forgiven thee, or to say: Arise and walk?"

In other words, to heal the body is easier in itself than to heal the soul; for the body can offer no resistance, whereas the soul too often does. But if Christ had not the power He claimed, then it was far easier and safer for Him to pretend to heal the soul than the body; for forgiveness of sin was not apparent to the senses, but the healing of the body was; so if the sick man did not rise at His command He would be convicted as an impostor.

How obstinately these Jewish leaders strove against the truth! May God's mercy save me from such hardness of heart.

SECOND POINT.—"But, that you may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins: Arise, take up thy bed, and go into thy

house. And immediately he arose and, taking up his bed, went his way in the sight of all.”

This miracle, then, is offered as a distinct proof that Christ, as man, has the power of forgiving sin; and, having that power Himself, He can delegate it to other men, as we know He has done in the sacrament of Penance. Let us thank Him for this beautiful invention of His love, this inexhaustible fountain of mercy, and, with the multitude, glorify God “that gave such power to men.”

THIRD POINT.—We may gather yet another lesson from the way in which our Saviour here subordinates the corporal blessing to the spiritual one.

In theory we all admit that the good things of this life are small and contemptible beside those better things which God has in store for us in heaven. In theory also we hold, with St. Paul, that “the sufferings of this life are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us”; but how difficult it is to put our theory in practice! We do ask for spiritual blessings, no doubt! yet is it not true that when we are seen praying our hearts out, wrestling in prayer, as Jacob wrestled with the angel, we are almost always begging for some temporal favor? We plead fervently for such things, much more quietly for the others. And do we never repine under suffering? Do we easily recognize it as a blessing in disguise, an earnest of heavenly joy?

I will try to bring my practice into line with my theory by living the life of faith. My soul cries out for bread; shall I give it a stone?

Colloquy with Jesus merciful. Agnus Dei.

MEDITATION XLII

THE LUNATIC BOY

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—On coming down from Mount Thabor after the Transfiguration Our Lord finds His disciples trying to exorcise a possessed boy. Having aroused the father's faith, He casts out the demon (*Matt. xviii; Mark ix; Luke ix*).

Mental Picture.—An excited crowd surrounding the apostles, Jesus coming down the hillside, the child's father running to meet Him.

Petition.—A strong faith.

FIRST POINT.—“Master,” cries the poor father, “I beseech Thee look on my son; for he is my only one. He is a lunatic, and suffereth much, having a dumb spirit, who, wheresoever he taketh him, seizeth him, and he suddenly crieth out, and he throweth him down and teareth him and dasheth him, and, bruising him, he hardly departeth from him. He foameth and gnasheth with the teeth and pineth away. And I brought him to Thy dis-

ciples, and I spoke to them to cast him out, and they could not cure him.”

The symptoms are those of epilepsy, due in this case to the agency of a demon; for until the death of Christ evil spirits had terrible power even among the chosen people.

And Jesus said: “O faithless and perverse generation! how long shall I be with you and suffer you? Bring hither thy son.” Even as the boy was coming the devil threw him down and tore him. And Jesus asked the father: “How long is it since this hath happened unto him? But he said: From his infancy. And oftentimes hath he cast him into the fire and into waters to destroy him; but, if thou canst do anything, help us, having compassion on us.” The poor father’s distress is pitiable enough; but his faith is weak, and, though the heart of Jesus is brimful of compassion, He always demands faith as a condition for His interference.

In the afflicted boy’s condition we have a vivid picture of the slavery of sin; for so do a man’s passions tear and rend him, casting him now into the fire of concupiscence, now into the waters of inconstancy, so that even when he would draw nigh to his Saviour the tormentor grips him still. “The good which I will I do not; but the evil which I will not that I do” (*Rom. vii. 19*).

SECOND POINT.—The poor man’s faith being so

feeble and wavering, Our Lord tries to strengthen it. "If thou canst believe," He says, "all things are possible to him that believeth." Then the father of the boy cries out with tears: "I do believe, Lord. Help Thou my unbelief." Whereupon Jesus says: "Deaf and dumb spirit, I command thee go out of him and enter not any more into him. And, crying out and greatly tearing him, he went out of him; and he became as dead." Even under Our Lord's eyes the devil in his rage and hatred makes a last attempt to kill the child. "But Jesus, taking him by the hand, lifted him up; and he arose, and He restored him to his father."

I will pray, then, for a sturdy, unfaltering faith. God does not always give what we ask for; but He never turns a deaf ear to them that trust in Him. "He shall cry to Me and I will hear him; I am with him in tribulation; I will deliver him and I will glorify him" (*Ps. xc. 15*).

THIRD POINT.—"Then came the disciples to Jesus secretly and said: "Why could not we cast him out? Jesus said to them: Because of your unbelief." Then he went on to give a further reason: "This kind is not cast out but by fasting and prayer."

There are some demons, then, whose power is so great that ordinary means will not avail to put them to flight. Then, in addition to long and fervent prayer, we must do violence to ourselves by

some practice of mortification; for nothing strengthens the soul nor disconcerts the tempter so effectually as a little salutary penance. It was to teach us this that our Saviour fasted forty days and nights before His own combat with Satan.

Colloquy with Our Lord. Acts of Faith and Hope.

The Raising of the Dead

Three instances only are recorded of our Saviour raising the dead to life, and they are symbolical of three kinds of spiritual resurrection. The first is that of a child, representing a soul in venial sin, the second of a young man carried out for burial, the image of a soul in mortal sin, the third of a man no longer young and actually four days in the grave, in whom we may see a soul not only dead but buried in sinful habits.

MEDITATION XLIII

THE DAUGHTER OF JAIRUS

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—Jairus, ruler of the synagogue at Capharnaum, implores Our Lord to come and heal his daughter. Jesus goes with him, finds the child dead, takes her by the hand, and restores her to life (*Matt. ix; Mark v; Luke viii*).

Mental Picture.—Jesus standing over the dead girl.

Petition.—Confidence in our Saviour's power and mercy.

FIRST POINT.—St. Matthew makes the afflicted father speak of his child as dead; according to the two other evangelists he says that she is dying. It would seem that in the agony of his grief he gave utterance to the dreadful uncertainty he felt. Having left her "at the point of death," he might well fear that she was now dead. We are told that she was an only child and not yet twelve years old.

Jairus had not the faith of his friend, the Roman centurion, for he thought it necessary that Our Lord should come down and lay His hand on the child; still Jesus went with him. On the way, to the despair of the poor father, a delay was caused by the woman with the issue of blood, and, to strengthen his faith, Jesus made this woman publicly acknowledge her cure. At that very moment word was brought that the child was really dead. "Fear not," said the Saviour, "only believe and she shall be safe."

SECOND POINT.—"And when Jesus was come into the house of the ruler and saw the minstrels and the multitude" of hired mourners "making a rout He said: Give place; for the girl is not dead, but sleepeth." As if He would say: What is death to you is sleep to Me, because I can awake the dead.

“And they laughed Him to scorn, knowing that she was dead.”

It is evident that these people had none of the dispositions which could make them worthy to witness the great miracle; so Our Lord puts them all out. Hence we may learn how our Saviour, before He will do anything for us, looks to find in us a humble and simple faith. We see also how this Prince of Peace dislikes noise and distraction. “It is good,” says His prophet, “to wait with silence for the salvation of God” (*Lam.* iii. 26). So we must turn out the minstrels and the crowd of foolish and worldly thoughts that make a rout and wait in silent prayer for His mercies.

THIRD POINT.—Then, taking with Him Peter, James, and John, and the father and mother of the maiden, He went in and took her by the hand, saying: “Maid, arise”; and immediately she “rose up and walked; and He bid them give her to eat.”

Now venial sin, as we know, though it wounds the soul, does not kill it; nevertheless, if not checked, it will before long bring on mortal sin, just as blood-poisoning may be set up from a small scratch which is not properly attended to. So Our Lord says of this child: “She is not dead, but sleepeth.” And when He bids them give her to eat we are reminded of First Communion, fortifying the innocent soul against the assaults of the

world, the flesh and the devil. "He that eateth this bread shall live for ever" (*John* vi. 59).

Colloquy with Jesus in the tabernacle. *O Salutaris Hostia*, page 404.

MEDITATION XLIV

THE WIDOW'S SON

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—As Jesus was entering the little city of Naim He met a widow carrying her only son to the grave. He at once raised him to life and restored him to his mother (*Luke* vii).

Mental Picture.—Jesus, surrounded by a dense crowd, bidding the dead man arise.

Petition.—Grace to look to Him alone for comfort in sorrow.

FIRST POINT.—A great multitude of people accompanied our Saviour and, as they mounted the hill that led into the city, they encountered another great multitude following the dead man to the grave. This mighty miracle, therefore, like the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, was witnessed by thousands of people and produced a widespread impression. It was also, like that, an unsolicited mercy, Our Lord acting in each case on the promptings of His own heart. There we are told that "seeing a great multitude, He had

compassion on them''; here we read that He was "moved with compassion" at the sight of this poor mother's affliction. Was not He, too, "the only son of His mother?" Who can doubt that He thought of Mary following Him to the tomb outside the gate of Jerusalem?

SECOND POINT.—"Weep not," He says, and, as the poor widow's tearful eyes met His, unutterable peace comes down into her soul. She has heard many words of sympathy this day; but the comfort of men, however kindly meant, is impotent in the presence of a sorrow such as hers. There is but one true consoler. Would to God we might realize this!

We must all rise up one after another and pass out of the noisy city of this world to bury our dead loves. Will Jesus meet us in the gate? Surely He will if our trust is in Him. He may not raise our dead to life; He may not give us back, as to Job, more than we have lost; but He will give us peace of heart and a confident assurance of that lasting happiness which can not be long delayed.

THIRD POINT.—"And He came near and touched the bier, and they that carried it stood still." It was, indeed, a thrilling moment. That vast crowd was awed into silence and every eye was fixed on Jesus as He stood beside the bier. Then in that hush of expectancy the mighty command was heard: "Young man, I say to thee, arise. And

he that was dead sat up and began to speak; and He gave him to his mother."

Of Jairus' little daughter Christ says: "The damsel is not dead, but sleepeth"; for the death of this child represents venial sin. But here we have a picture of mortal sin, which deserves eternal separation from God. Yet "if your sins be as scarlet they shall be made white as snow" (*Is. i. 18*); for Christ our Lord has blotted out "the handwriting of the decree that was against us, . . . fastening it to the cross" (*Col. ii. 14*). O my Saviour, fill my soul with dread of that eternal death from which Thou hast delivered me at so dear a cost, that I may never again forfeit Thy favor and friendship.

Colloquy with Jesus crucified. De Profundis, page 382.

MEDITATION XLV

LAZARUS

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—Our Lord had retired before His enemies beyond the Jordan. Meantime His friend Lazarus fell sick and by the time He reached Bethany was dead and buried. Jesus went to the tomb and bade him come forth (*John xi*).

Mental Picture.—The dead man, wrapped in his

grave-clothes, appearing at the mouth of his tomb.

Petition.—Grace to recognize Jesus as the best and truest of friends.

FIRST POINT.—“Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick.” Such was the touching message of Martha and Mary. Like our Lady’s prayer at C’ana, it made no formal petition, but simply drew attention to their distress. Indeed, it was probably suggested by her; for we have every reason to think she was then staying with her Son’s devoted friends. None knew the heart of Jesus so well as His holy Mother, and we may well believe that all her prayers took this form. Let me learn this prayer from her lips.

Yet after receiving the message our Saviour remained where He was for two days. We are told that “Jesus loved Martha and her sister Mary and Lazarus”; how, then, could He leave them in such affliction? Well, that is His way. He knows all the good that comes from suffering and how and when to comfort us under it. I will learn, then, to bear it in peace and hope, waiting till He comes.

SECOND POINT.—“This sickness is not unto death,” was Our Lord’s reply to the message; “but for the glory of God; that the Son of God may be glorified by it.” Nevertheless Lazarus died, and it must have been a severe trial to the faith of the two sisters; but they had our Lady’s faith to sup-

port them, and those last words of Jesus had for them all a deep significance. So when Martha met Him on His arrival at Bethany she sobbed out: "Lord, if Thou hadst been here my brother had not died; but now also I know"—and it shows that she was half expecting the miracle that followed—"that whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it Thee. Jesus saith to her: Thy brother shall rise again." "I know," replied Martha, "that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said to her: I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in Me, although he be dead, shall live, and every one that liveth and believeth in Me shall not die for ever. Believest thou this? She saith to him: Yea, Lord, I have believed that Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God who art come into this world."

Then Martha calls her sister, and Mary repeats her words: "Lord, if Thou hadst been here my brother had not died." How often have they said this to each other as they hung over their brother's deathbed!

Then, seeing them all weeping, Jesus wept. He wept for His friends in their present sorrow; He wept also for all sinners; for this death was a type to Him of many and many a spiritual death. "Behold how He loved him!" cried the Jews—how little they knew of His love! "But some of them said: "Could not He that opened the eyes of the

man born blind have caused that this man should not die?"

THIRD POINT.—They came to the sepulchre. "Now it was a cave and a stone was laid over it. Jesus saith: Take away the stone." Then, after praying aloud to His heavenly Father, "He cried with a loud voice: Lazarus, come forth. And presently he that had been dead came forth bound feet and hands with winding-bands, and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus said to them: Loose him and let him go."

Lazarus dead and four days in his grave is the image of a soul buried in long habits of sin. He is bound hand and foot, with a napkin about his face and a great stone to shut him in. Christ alone can summon him back to life. "Rise, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead; and Christ shall enlighten thee" (*Eph.* v. 14).

Colloquy with Jesus, the resurrection and the life. *De Profundis*, page 382.

The Parables

MEDITATION XLVI

THE SOWING OF THE SEED

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—The sower went out to sow his seed, and some fell by the wayside, some upon rock,

some among thorns, some upon good ground (*Matt.* xiii; *Mark* iv; *Luke* viii).

Petition.—To make good use of grace.

FIRST POINT.—What kind of soil is my heart? Is it like the wayside, the well-worn path running through the field, where the seed is sure to be trodden down by the feet of men or carried away by the fowls of the air? Am I frivolous, thoughtless, unresponsive to holy inspirations, so heedless that I take no pains to understand what the Good Spirit whispers to me? If so, it will be easy for the devil to take the word out of my heart, lest believing I should be saved.

Or is my heart like the rocky ground, with so little depth of soil that the seed, springing up, presently withers in the heat of the sun? Do I receive the word with joy, believe for a while, and in time of temptation and persecution fall away? Do I make resolutions only to break them, showing no steadiness of purpose, because I am not and never have been really in earnest about the work of my salvation?

SECOND POINT.—Or maybe my heart is overgrown with thorns, “with the cares and the riches and the pleasures of this life,” so that the good seed of God’s grace, choked by a thick and matted overgrowth, can not find its way to the light, and so yields no fruit. By riches our Saviour means not money only, but anything whatever on which

our affections may be set, intellectual acquirements, personal influence, natural gifts of any kind, our love for such things always tending to overspread and stifle what is good in the soul, and so to shut out God. There are men who dare to say they have no time to serve God; yet what is time given for?

THIRD POINT.—Can I say that my heart is good soil? Do I hear the word and keep it and ponder it and bring forth its fruit in patience? If not it must be for one or other of three reasons; either from want of faith in my high calling, or from want of desire, or from want of generosity.

Perhaps I do not believe that I am meant to be really holy; yet I can not deny that I was a saint once and must be a saint again if I am ever to see God. Had I died directly after Baptism I should have gone straight to heaven, for then I was absolutely free from sin; and I must be pure as I was then before I pass out of purgatory. Only saints find admission into heaven.

Or perchance I have no wish for holiness, am content with mediocrity. Then I shall do well to reflect that he who aims low runs a great risk of falling short of the mark. I may lose my soul if I will not try to sanctify it.

Or again, though I feel some little desire of holiness, I may shrink from paying down the price. That price is self-restraint, self-conquest, unworld-

liness, and I am afraid of the constant effort it calls for. I would sooner have the dross burnt out of me hereafter than take the trouble to keep a pure heart in this life.

Colloquy with the divine Sower. Veni, Sancte Spiritus, page 400.

MEDITATION XLVII

THE WHEAT AND THE COCKLE

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—"The kingdom of heaven is likened to a man that sowed good seed in his field; but while men were asleep his enemy came and oversowed cockle among the wheat, and went his way" (*Matt. xiii*).

Petition.—A strong hope that God will perfect the work He has begun in me.

FIRST POINT.—This field, Our Lord tells us, is the world; the wheat are the good, the cockle the wicked; the enemy is the devil, the harvest the end of the world; the reapers are the angels. This parable therefore depicts that never-ending struggle between good and evil which is going on in the world around us and will cease only with the last trumpet.

We know that the Holy Spirit has said of the world; so it is no surprise to us to find it over-

sown with the cockle of infidelity and wickedness and presenting a hopeless tangle of vice and virtue growing together and striving for the mastery in every city, every village, every household; but that this same struggle should go on in the little world of our own hearts is a sad puzzle to us. How many deeds of mercy have we performed, and yet how many sins have we committed! It would seem that at one and the same time we deserve both heaven and hell.

What an inscrutable mystery! We can understand a man being corrupted by a corrupt world and coming to utter ruin; but how can one who really loves God and gives convincing proof that God's love actuates his life by sacrificing his own inclinations—how can such a man so often fall from virtue, making his whole life a motley patchwork of light and darkness, evil and good?

SECOND POINT.—St. Francis of Sales gives an answer to this riddle which is frightening enough: "As when the stag has left his lair his scent remains behind him, so the outward semblance of a good life may survive after its inward virtue has departed." That is to say, one who has been trained in holiness may by mere force of habit go on in a course which to all appearances is holy, although to God's all-seeing eye there is no longer any value left in what he does, because his heart is not right. If this, as we may hope, is not yet

verified in us, then the only solution we can discover is just this, that all the good in us comes from God, all the evil from ourselves. Yet this leaves the mystery a mystery still; for why does not the good predominate? Will there never be an end to this indecisive war? Will grace never win a final victory? Yes, at the last day, the hour of death. Till then wheat and cockle must grow together; yet by strenuous courage we may hold the powers of evil in subjection. "Watch ye, and pray," says the Lord. It was "while men were asleep" that all the mischief was done.

THIRD POINT.—When this hard-fought conflict is at last brought to an end, then our brave deeds will be all on record; for while the good God, having once forgiven us, casts our sins "behind His back" He never forgets the smallest service we do Him. So all the good found in us shall be gathered into the Lord's barn, the evil being cast into the fire; not that unquenchable fire, "where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth," but the merciful flame of purgatory. And when our purgation is complete, when the dross is burnt out of us and nothing but pure gold left, "then shall the just shine like stars in the kingdom of My Father." This is how our Saviour ends His parable.

Colloquy with Christ, the master of the field. Miserere, page 383.

MEDITATION XLVIII

THE GROWTH OF THE SEED

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—"So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the earth, and should sleep, and rise, night and day, and the seed should spring, and grow up whilst he knoweth not. For the earth of itself bringeth forth fruit, first the blade, then the ear, afterward the full corn in the ear; and when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come" (*Mark* iv. 26-29).

Petition.—Patience in hope.

FIRST POINT.—In this parable the seed is supposed to fall upon good soil; the sower therefore has little trouble with it. He sleeps and rises and goes about his business, and all the while the seed is growing, he knows not how.

My heart—thank God for it!—is not utterly unproductive. The seed began to grow at once and is growing still; it already shows above ground. Let me bless God's mercy for holy Baptism whereby He reclaimed me from the waste land of unregenerate nature, for giving me Christian parents to sow the good seed in my heart, and for all the healthy surroundings of my childhood, the

want of which so often prevents the seed from striking, or at least checks its growth.

SECOND POINT.—But, though the earth is said to bring forth “of itself,” we know that there will be no growth at all without rain and sunshine. The rain and sunshine is God’s grace, and how abundantly has He provided them! Wholesome instruction, good books and sermons, the example of others, confession, communion, holy Mass, secret inspirations, and attractions without number. What use am I making of all these blessed influences? Good seed can not help thriving under good conditions; but I have a will of my own. Is it a good will? Am I doing my best to respond generously to God’s unceasing benevolence?

THIRD POINT.—The growth of the seed is continuous, but, for all that, very slow. Day and night succeed each other; for some weeks we see nothing; then at last the tiny green blade appears above ground. It is full of hope and promise; yet a severe frost would kill it. It pushes its way up sturdily, and after a while we can see the ear forming within it. As the months pass on that ear grows fuller and heavier, till its weight at last is almost too great for the stalk. It is ripening now and, if no fierce storm comes to lay it, at harvest-time it will be gathered in, and all will be well.

So it is with me. God knows, my growth in

holiness is slow enough; yet He waits for me, and I must wait. But, however slow, let it be continuous; for I must be ready for the harvest, and I know not when that will come.

Colloquy with Jesus Christ, the Lord of the harvest. Act of Hope.

MEDITATION XLIX

THE PEARL OF PRICE

Preparatory Prayer, as above.

History.—"The kingdom of heaven is like to a merchant seeking good pearls, who when he had found one pearl of great price went his way and sold all that he had and bought it" (*Matt. xiii*).

Petition.—The desire of holiness.

FIRST POINT.—This pearl is true happiness, which is to be found only in the fervent service of God. Now all men long for happiness and spend their whole lives in looking for it; how comes it that so few find it? Because they search in every direction but the right one. Some think to find it in money, some in power, some in knowledge, some in human affection, some in gaiety and excitement, some in other forms of self-indulgence; but such things as these can never slake the thirst of an immortal soul. We can not be sure of them for an hour even in this world, and we certainly can not take them with us into the next.

Man wants a happiness that will last. These earthly joys are but the husks thrown to the swine, and they that set their hearts on them are no better than swine, no better than the stray dogs to which David likens them: "They shall return at evening and shall suffer hunger like dogs, and shall go round about the city. They shall be scattered abroad to eat, and shall murmur if they be not filled" (*Ps. lviii. 15*). Filled they never can be; so they are always hungry, always growling and dissatisfied.

SECOND POINT.—Other men there are who find this precious pearl, take it in their hands and examine it, are convinced of its surpassing worth, and yet have not the heart to purchase it. It is valued at all they possess; they must beggar themselves to get it, and that they are not prepared to do. So they try to beat down the price, to strike a bargain with God, offering something less than what He demands; all is more than they can afford.

They will hear Mass without fail on Sundays and festivals, receive holy communion from time to time, give a larger sum in charity; beyond that they really can not go. To be pleasantly warm about their religion is not so serious, but to be red-hot is too much. Are they likely to secure the pearl of price on these terms?

THIRD POINT.—Some there are, however, who, having found this pearl of true happiness, are

ready to sell all they have and buy it. The price may seem high; but the loss is temporal, the gain eternal, peace and hope in this world and then, when this short life is over, a joy which no man can take from them. Am I one of these? Am I prepared to give all, all my energies of soul and body without reserve? Am I ready to live as a stranger and a pilgrim on this earth? (1 *Pet.* ii. 11) remembering that I "have not here a lasting city, but seek one that is to come" (*Heb.* xiii. 14). I may not be called to withdraw from the world into a cloister, but I am certainly called to follow Christ, my Master, in my own walk in life. It was not to monks and nuns but to men and women of the world that St. Paul wrote: "The time is short. It remaineth that they also who have wives be as if they had none, and they that weep as though they wept not, and they that rejoice as if they rejoice not, and they that buy as though they possessed not, and they that use this world as if they used it not; for the fashion of this world passeth away" (1 *Cor.* vii. 29-31).

Colloquy with our Saviour seeking pearls.
Sume, Domine, page 398.

MEDITATION L

THE LOST SHEEP

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—"What man of you that hath an hundred sheep, and if he shall lose one of them doth he not leave the ninety-nine in the desert, and go after that which was lost until he find it?" (*Luke* xv.)

Petition.—A deep sense of the love of the Good Shepherd.

FIRST POINT.—"All we, like sheep, have gone astray" (*Is.* liii. 6). "I have gone astray like a sheep that is lost. Seek Thy servant, because I have not forgotten Thy commandments" (*Ps.* cxviii, 176). Alas! I have forgotten, O Lord, or have acted as if I had forgotten. Leaving Thy fold, I have wandered through the thorny ways of sin, and should have been lost for ever and torn to pieces by the wolves but for that great love which led Thee to come down from heaven and look for me. How long and how patiently Thou hast sought me! and when Thou didst find me at last Thou showedst no anger at all the trouble I had given Thee, nothing but pity for my misery. Ah! what a Good Shepherd we have in Thee, Christ Jesus! A sheep, as we all know, goes astray not from wilfulness, not with any wish to get

away from the shepherd and lose itself, but simply by following its own inclination. It is attracted by something that pleases it, and then, while it is browsing quietly, the flock goes on without it.

So it is with us. We follow our natural instincts and through them are led away from the path of virtue. Beware, then, of your own frailty and keep your heart fixed on Jesus Christ. Remember that one false step may have most fatal consequences.

SECOND POINT.—“And when he hath found it lay it upon his shoulders rejoicing.” Yes, our Saviour does not drive His strayed sheep back to the fold, but lifts it up on His shoulders, taking upon Himself all the pain of the homeward journey, that so He may spare the wanderer. Has He not carried each one of us along the Way of Sorrows? “He was wounded for our iniquity, He was bruised for our sins, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed” (*Is.* liii. 5). What else was the Way of the Cross but this journey back to the fold?

THIRD POINT.—The shepherd of the parable is forced to leave the ninety-nine in the desert, that he may search for the one that is lost, though we are not to understand that he leaves them in danger, for the desert here means their grazing-ground. But our Good Shepherd does not do this. He seeks for the strayed sheep without for one

moment losing sight of the rest of His flock. His eyes are always upon them; His whole attention is centred on each one; He never goes away from them: "Behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world" (*Matt.* xxviii. 20).

"And coming home call together his friends and neighbors, saying to them: Rejoice with me, because I have found my sheep that was lost. I say to you that even so there shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance more than upon ninety-nine just who need not penance." Is the sinner then dearer to God than the sinless? Assuredly not; yet compassion for the sinner's misery makes the joy at his repentance all the more intense. This we see still more touchingly illustrated in the story of the Prodigal Son.

At the end of the following parable, The Lost Groat, the words, "there shall be joy in heaven," etc., are repeated with a striking variation:—"There shall be joy before the angels of God upon one sinner doing penance." This joy in heaven therefore is not the joy of those who stand around the throne, but of Him who sits upon it. The angels witness the joy of their God over the penitent sinner and share in that joy; yet it is His joy rather than theirs. "Rejoice with Me because I have found My sheep."

Colloquy with the Good Shepherd. O Deus, ego amo Te, page 385.

MEDITATION LI

THE PRODIGAL SON—I

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—The younger of two sons leaves his father's house and, after wasting all his substance, is set to feed swine. Then he repents and returns to his father, who receives him with open arms (*Luke xv.*)

Petition.—True and heartfelt repentance.

FIRST POINT.—The ingratitude and the degradation of the sinner.

This young man evidently had the best and kindest of fathers; yet he was not happy at home. He longed to see the world and be free to indulge in a reckless course of unrestrained pleasure. So he begged his father to give him his portion, whereby is signified both body and soul, and, having turned it into ready money, went into a far country, where it was soon wasted in riotous living. Then "came a mighty famine in that country, and he began to be in want; and he went and "cleaved" (or hired himself) "to one of the citizens of that country," who sent him to feed his swine. Thus it is that the sinner, through his love of self and of the world, comes at last to be the slave and swineherd of the devil. "And he would fain have filled his belly," that is, not satisfied himself, but staved off the

pangs of hunger, "with the husks the swine did eat"; for no man gave him anything better.

SECOND POINT.—Then in his misery and shame memory travels back to the plenty and comfort of the home he has left. His father's hired servants are far better off than he; for all there have food in abundance; and the good thought comes to him to return, acknowledge his sin, and beg to be numbered among those same hired servants. "And he arose and went to his father," dreading the meeting, no doubt, and only induced to face his father's anger by the intensity of his own wretchedness.

That good father, however, was always grieving for his lost boy and had gone up, ah, how often! onto the flat roof of the house in the hope of seeing him return. He is there now and, to his delight, recognizes in the ragged and famished wayfarer the child of his love. Hurrying down, he runs forward to meet him and before he can utter a word has clasped him in his arms and given him the kiss of forgiveness. "Father," sobs the poor reprobate, broken-hearted now, "I have sinned against heaven and before thee. I am not now worthy to be called thy son." He had resolved to add: "Make me as one of thy hired servants;" but the kindness of the good old man makes that impossible.

THIRD POINT.—In this beautiful parable we have

an image of God's dealings with the sinner. He lets him go sadly enough; but, having given him free-will, He will never interfere with it. Let him taste the bitterness of sin; then perhaps he will come back to his senses. "Know thou and see that it is an evil and a bitter thing for thee to have left the Lord thy God" (*Jer.* ii. 19). Yet the good God does not lose sight of him; in the depths of his degradation He is with him still. It is He that recalls to his mind the happiness of home, suggests the thought of returning, and sends the grace needed to act upon it. The father in the parable forgives once; but our good God how many times!

Colloquy with our heavenly Father. *Miserere*, page 383.

MEDITATION LII

THE PRODIGAL SON—II

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—The Prodigal is now by his father's orders clothed as of old, the fatted calf is killed, and they begin to make merry. The elder son, when he hears of it, is angry and will not enter the house; so his father goes out to plead with him (*Luke* xv).

Petition.—A grateful heart.

FIRST POINT.—"And the father said to his ser-

vants: Bring forth quickly the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his finger and shoes on his feet; and bring hither the fatted calf, and let us eat and make merry, because this my son was dead, and is come to life again; was lost, and is found." This first or best robe is the garment of grace, forfeited by sin; the ring is the symbol of perfect reconciliation; the shoes indicate that he now abandons the broad way of iniquity to walk henceforth in the narrow but quiet path of obedience and love; and the feast is the Holy Eucharist, for it is on the flesh and blood of the Immaculate Lamb that the penitent sinner is regaled. And so once more there is "joy before the angels of God upon one sinner doing penance." He "was lost and is found."

SECOND POINT.—"Now his elder brother was in the field, and when he came and drew nigh to the house he heard music and dancing;" so he asked what this meant, and when he heard he was angry and would not go in.

So great is God's joy over the return of His prodigal that, if they did not share it, the just might well be jealous of it, saying, as this young man said when his father went out to entreat him: "Behold, for so many years do I serve thee, and I have never transgressed thy commandment, and yet thou hast never given me a kid to make merry with my friends; but as soon as this thy son is

come"—in his jealous wrath he will not call him brother—"who hath devoured his substance with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf."

"Son," answered his father, "thou art always with me, and all that I have is thine." Is it nothing to be always in thy father's house, in his company, in the daily and hourly enjoyment of his confidence and love? How canst thou, who hast so much, feel angry to see thy erring brother restored to favor? Surely "it was fit that we should make merry and be glad; for this thy brother"—and he is thy brother as well as my son—"was dead, and is come to life again, was lost and is found."

THIRD POINT.—This, the most beautiful and touching of all the "Parables of Mercy," falls short, as they all must do—how far short!—of the great reality. Not satisfied with sending his servants to look for us and invite us to return, our good God has sent His divine Son also, and He, our elder brother, who in the parable appears unfriendly, is the very cause of our reconciliation with His eternal Father. He has left His home in heaven to share our miseries, to bear the penalty of our folly, to help and support us on our way home, and He intercedes for us at the throne of grace, showing His wounded hands and feet to move our God to mercy.

Then, again, in the parable not a word is said

of the Prodigal's mother; but in our blessed Lady we have a mother who is constantly pleading for us. Oh, how earnestly will I strive henceforth to make up to them all, father, mother, and brother, for my past unkindness!

Colloquy with God the Father through Jesus and Mary. *Pater* and *Ave*.

MEDITATION LIII

THE GOOD SAMARITAN

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—A certain Jew on his way to Jericho was nearly killed by robbers. A priest first and then a levite saw him lying in the ditch, and left him there; but a Samaritan who followed them took pity on him, bound up his wounds, carried him to an inn, and took care of him (*Luke x*).

Petition.—Gratitude for what Christ has done for me and a genuine and practical love, for His sake, of my neighbor.

FIRST POINT.—The road between Jerusalem and Jericho was infested with robbers, part of it being known as “the Red Way” from the many deeds of blood there committed. A certain Jew going through this pass is attacked, stripped, and left for dead by the roadside.

“It chanced that a certain priest went down

the same way." That is, it looked like chance; but in very truth it was an opportunity offered him by God of performing a good work and earning a great blessing. Well, this priest, "seeing him, passed by," as did also the levite who came after him. "But a certain Samaritan, being on his journey, came near him and, seeing him, was moved with compassion."

Now the Jews and the Samaritans were bitter enemies; yet to this good man that counted for nothing. A fellow creature was in need of help and it was in his power to help him. He did not stop to ask why neither priest nor levite had done anything for their own countryman, but seized eagerly on the golden opportunity they had let slip. A golden opportunity in very truth; and says St. John Chrysostom, "if you found a gold piece lying on the road would you stay to inquire why this man or the other did not pick it up? Would you not at once pounce upon it yourself?" (Hom. viii, against the Jews.)

SECOND POINT.—"And going up to him he bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and, setting him upon his own beast, brought him to an inn and took care of him." Am I ready to do services of this sort, or am I one of those who, shirking all personal attendance on the poor and suffering, think they fulfil the law of charity by a gift of money? To throw a coin to a needy man

is easy enough, to make oneself his servant is not so easy; yet Christ for my sake took "the form of a servant," laying His hands on the sick, even on the leper. And we know how His saints have delighted to imitate Him: St. Elizabeth of Hungary, St. Camillus, St. Vincent of Paul, St. Peter Claver, the "slave of the slaves," and thousands more have made themselves the servants of the sick and the poor.

"And the next day he took out two pence"—about sixteen cents of our money, and money then went much further than now—"and gave to the host, saying: 'Take care of him; and whatsoever thou shalt spend over and above I at my return will repay thee.'"

THIRD POINT.—The Fathers apply this parable to our blessed Lord Himself. He, above all others, is the Good Samaritan. The wounded Jew represents fallen man, robbed by the devil of innocence and grace as he went down from Jerusalem, the city of peace, and left by the roadside for dead. The priesthood and the sacrifices of the old law can do nothing for him; they leave him where he lies. Then Christ, coming on His journey through this world, notwithstanding that man is His enemy, is moved with pity, binds up his wounds, pouring in the oil and wine of His life-giving sacraments, carries him to the inn, His holy Church, and there leaves him to be taken care of till the day when He

will return to reward all those who for love of Him have been kind to the poor sufferer.

Now persuasively, both by word and example, does our Saviour enforce His conclusion: "Go, and do thou in like manner."

Colloquy with Jesus, the Good Samaritan. Act of Charity.

MEDITATION LIV

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—The beggar, Lazarus, lies uncared for at the rich man's gate. They both come to die, and one is carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom, the other buried in hell (*Luke xvi*).

Petition.—Poverty of spirit.

FIRST POINT.—"There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and feasted sumptuously every day." He is charged with no crime; but simply led a life of selfish luxury. How many in these days do just the same!

The good things of this world, of which this man had such abundance, may, if well used, be made profitable for salvation; yet they are full of danger, so full that Christ has said: "It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of

God'' (*Luke* xviii. 25). So hard is it to possess without attachment of heart; and this is true of every kind of riches, physical or mental qualities, anything one regards as his own. For the poor man, on the contrary, the very fact of his actual poverty makes poverty of spirit come, so to speak, naturally.

The beggar, Lazarus, lay at the rich man's gate "full of sores, desiring to be filled with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table," but desiring in vain, for "no one did give him." His only friends were the dogs, which "came and licked his sores."

The rich man, then, was proud and heartless in the midst of luxury, the poor beggar humble and resigned in his squalid penury.

SECOND POINT.—"And it came to pass that the beggar died and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom"; this being the name given to the place of rest where before the redemption of the world the souls of the elect, after their purgation, waited for admission into heaven. "The rich man also died, and he was buried in hell." Then "he cried and said: Father Abraham, have mercy on me and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water to cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame."

What a retribution this! He who had refused

his crumbs to Lazarus now begs of him one single drop of water! Abraham reminds him that on earth he had good things, whereas Lazarus had evil things. How just, then, that Lazarus should now be comforted, he tormented! "And besides all this, between us and you there is fixed a great chaos," an impassable gulf.

Oh, the pity of it! What if he could once more see Lazarus lying at his gate? How much he would do for him! Nay, how gladly would he change places with him! He has had his chance; now it is gone forever.

THIRD POINT.—The wretched man then begs that Lazarus may be sent to warn his brethren on earth, "lest they also come into this place of torments," insinuating that if he himself had had some such special warning he might have saved his soul, and that God had not given him a fair chance. What is Abraham's reply? "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they believe if one rise again from the dead."

Jesus Christ has risen from the dead; do we yet really believe? If so, we shall prove our belief by acting on His solemn warning: "Lay not up to yourselves treasures on earth, where the rust and moth consume, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up to yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither the rust nor moth

doth consume, and where thieves do not break through, nor steal. For where thy treasure is, there is thy heart also" (*Matt.* vi. 19-21).

Colloquy with Jesus risen. De Profundis, page 382.

MEDITATION LV

THE UNMERCIFUL SERVANT

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—"The kingdom of heaven is likened to a king who would take an account of his servants." One owes ten thousand talents and is condemned to be sold; but on his earnest entreaty the debt is cancelled. Going out, he meets a fellow-servant who owes him a hundred pence, and he casts him into prison; whereupon his master hands him over to the torturers (*Matt.* xviii).

Petition.—The grace to forgive as I have been forgiven.

FIRST POINT.—Ten thousand Attic talents would be worth some two and a half millions of our money, ten thousand Hebrew talents a vast deal more. The debt, therefore, was one that could never be repaid. Does not this well describe my obligations to God? I can never meet them; for I owe Him all I have and all I am. The king condemned the poor wretch "to be sold, and his wife

and children and all that he had. . . . But that servant, falling down, besought him, saying: Have patience with me and I will pay thee all." Thereupon his lord, "being moved with pity, let him go and forgave him all the debt."

In the same generous way did Christ deal with the penitent thief. He asked only to be remembered and was promised immediate salvation.

God can remit large debts just as easily as small ones. He never forgives by halves; but then we must not repent by halves.

Now Adam and Eve and we, their children, all lay under this same sentence; but the good God, without waiting to be entreated, resolved to acquit us, not by a royal decree which should cost Him nothing, but by the death of His only Son, whose precious blood should cancel all our debt.

SECOND POINT.—"But when that servant was gone out he found one of his fellow-servants that owed him an hundred pence, and, laying hold of him, he throttled him, saying: Pay what thou owest." An hundred pence; for whatever my neighbor may owe me is as nothing to my indebtedness to God.

"And his fellow-servant, falling down, besought him, saying: Have patience with me and I will pay thee all," the very words he had himself made use of a moment before; and in this case they were honestly meant and could be made good, whereas

in his own they had promised what could never be fulfilled.

“And he would not; but went and cast him into prison till he paid the debt.” This is just how I act when I refuse to forgive my fellow-men. How can I then dare to say the Our Father? Is it not to invoke God’s wrath upon myself? “Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive,” etc. What else can that mean but, “seeing I am so unforgiving, forgive me not, O God”?

THIRD POINT.—“Now his fellow-servants, seeing what was done, were very much grieved, and they came and told their lord all that was done. Then his lord called him and said to him: Thou wicked servant! I forgave thee all the debt because thou besoughtest me; shouldst not thou then have had compassion on thy fellow-servant even as I had compassion on thee?” An unanswerable question this. It will be put to every one of us some day if we be not ready to forgive. “And his lord, being angry, delivered him to the tortures until he paid all the debt”; and, as the debt was unpayable *for ever*.

“So also shall my heavenly Father do to you, if you forgive not every one his brother from your hearts.” Christians are often heard to say: “I forgive; but I can never forget.” Well, perhaps not. The injury inflicted on you may have affected your whole life; you may find yourself re-

minded of it every hour of the day ; in that case you can not forget. But there is something better than forgetting, remembering only to forgive. Every time the wrong done to you crosses your mind give the wrong-doer over again your free and hearty pardon.

Colloquy with Our Lord to whom we are so deep in debt. Our Father.

MEDITATION LVI

THE UNJUST STEWARD

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—"There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods." He therefore gave him notice, whereupon the rascal fell to new dishonesties in the hope of making friends with his master's tenants (*Luke xvi*).

Petition.—Zeal for sanctification.

FIRST POINT.—A steward is one who contracts to look after another man's property as if it were his own; an unjust steward is, therefore, to all of us an object of abhorrence. Well, I am God's steward. I may fancy myself a proprietor; but I am in truth but a manager or caretaker, and the day must come when, like this wretched man, I shall be summoned to give an account of my stewardship.

Not only what I regard as my worldly possessions, but every limb and sense of my body, every faculty of my soul, every opportunity of shunning evil and doing good is held in trust from the Lord God, and to Him I am responsible for my use of it. From the hour that I pass out of this life I can be steward no longer.

SECOND POINT.—Then this bad man said to himself: “What shall I do? . . . To dig I am not able, to beg I am ashamed”—a shrewd idea came into his head: “I know what I will do.” Therefore, calling together his lord’s debtors, he said to the first: “How much dost thou owe my lord? But he said: An hundred barrels of oil. And he said to him: Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty.” In this way he dealt with all of them, that when he fell into poverty they might receive him into their houses.

“And the lord commended the unjust steward,” not for his dishonesty of course, but for his astuteness, forasmuch as the clever rogue “had done wisely” in taking such shrewd precautions to save himself from destitution.

The moral our Saviour draws from his story is this: “Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of iniquity,” that is, use your wealth for the benefit of the poor, or, if you are poor yourselves, give kindness and sympathy, which are better than

gold, "that when you shall fail they may receive you into everlasting dwellings."

THIRD POINT.—"The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light." Ah, yes, these children of the world, how much we have to learn from them! They rise early, these money-makers, and go to bed late. They sacrifice health and comfort, sit all day long in a close and gloomy office or endure for years a trying and pestilent climate. St. Francis Xavier was astounded and ashamed, on arriving in India, to find the Portuguese merchants already there before him and hard at work making money.

"Had I but served my God with half the zeal
I served my King."

Yes, half of that untiring energy wherewith men set themselves to secure wealth or honor would make a saint of any one of us.

Colloquy with our future Judge. *Miserere*, page 383.

MEDITATION LVII

THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—"Two men went up into the Temple to pray, the one a pharisee and the other a publican" (*Luke* xviii. 10).

Petition.—"A contrite and humble heart."

FIRST POINT.—The pharisee appears before God as if to have a reckoning with Him: "O God, I give Thee thanks that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, as also is this publican." He does not compare his vices with those of other men, nor his virtues with their virtues, but his virtues with their vices. All the good is on his side, all the evil on theirs. Nor is he satisfied with preferring himself to the rest of men in general, but goes on to pass judgment on the publican who is praying in the Temple with him, and thanks God that he is not such a reprobate as that.

And what are these virtues of his? Mere false colors, unsubstantial, unreal: "I fast twice in the week. I give tithes of all that I possess." His gaze is fixed, not on what he is, but on what he does; as though God could be put off with the husk of holiness and did not demand the inner core. He is a whitened sepulchre," fair without, full of corruption within; yet he does not feel his own wretchedness. He asks for nothing and of course gets nothing, and, instead of being justified, goes his way more hardened than before, having taught us how we are not to pray.

SECOND POINT.—"And the publican, standing afar off, would not so much as lift up his eyes

toward heaven; but struck his breast, saying: (O God, be merciful to me a sinner.”

Humility is a profound knowledge of ourselves, a deep sense of our sinfulness and tendency to sin. There is no exaggeration in it; it is the plain truth. And how can I ever forgive myself? It is true the good God has forgiven me; but am I for that reason to put my sins out of mind? No surely. If “I know my iniquity” then it should be “always before me.” I have injured my best friend; I have been cruelly ungrateful and unkind; how can I ever cease to lament it?

If I had offended a fellow-man who had always been good to me I should never think I had done enough to atone to him; I should never dream of saying to myself: He must have forgotten it by this, so I will think no more about it.

The habit of constant self-reproach sobers us; but it does not make us unhappy, for it is the surest proof we can have in this life that we are in God’s favor, “who resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble” (*James* iv. 6).

THIRD POINT.—“I say to you, this man went down into his house justified rather than the other”; for God looks at the heart, and what He would find in it above all else is self-accusation. The impure man, if he is humble, is not so far from God as the proud man, even though he be

pure; "Because every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." Such is the law of Christ's kingdom.

Colloquy with Jesus "meek and humble of heart." *Miserere*, page 383.

MEDITATION LVIII

THE LABORERS

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—"The kingdom of heaven is like to an householder, who went out early in the morning to hire laborers into his vineyard." Again and again throughout the day he returns to hire more. At evening they are paid their wages, every man receiving the same (*Matt. xx*).

Petition.—Earnestness in God's service.

FIRST POINT.—The market-place is the world, the vineyard either the Church or a man's own soul. The idlers in the market-place are they who live for this world, doing no work for God. Others there are who stand all their lives long outside themselves, never entering into their own souls, knowing nothing of their wants or their capacities. These, too, are idlers.

And God comes to us again and again; at Baptism, at the dawn of reason, at the reception of

each sacrament, confession, communion, confirmation, marriage, even at the eleventh hour, in the last anointing, saying: "Why stand you here all the day idle?"

It grieves me to see that so few are willing to labor for God, and still more that I have been myself so slothful. I will pray that He may meet with a more generous response in future both from me and from other men.

SECOND POINT.—In the parable all that were called seem to have gone into the vineyard; but in real life the greater number do not go. Why do they refuse to go? Either because they hate the labor of self-conquest and prefer to follow their own sweet will, or because they do not value the reward held out to them. They want something tangible, immediate; they do not like to be kept waiting for their wages. Now the penny of the parable represents eternal happiness; this life is the long, weary day of labor, and payment is not to be made till one's life's work is over. Consequently, they prefer to take service under the devil; for he, too, goes about the market-place to find laborers. He offers wretched pay, to be sure, the fleeting pleasures of this life, mingled, as they always are, with bitter disappointment and sorrow; but then he does not ask a man to restrain his passions and he pays his money down at once.

THIRD POINT.—When the steward came to pay

the workmen they that had entered the vineyard first, finding that the latest comers received as much as themselves, although they had "borne the burden of the day and the heats," murmured against the master of the house; but were promptly silenced.

"So," adds Our Lord in conclusion, "shall the last be first and the first last; for many are called, but few chosen." These words seem at first sight to have no bearing on the parable; for, so far as we can gather, all the laborers in the market-place were called and all chosen; and again the last comers were not preferred to the others, but merely put on a level with them. Perhaps they are meant to warn us that this may not always be so; that they who begin work at the eleventh hour and toil with all their might may deserve a greater reward than others who have been all day in the vineyard, and that, though all are called, not all are chosen, because so many are unwilling to work.

Colloquy with Our Lord and Master. Veni, Sancte Spiritus, page 400.

MEDITATION LIX

THE WICKED HUSBANDMEN

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—A man planted a vineyard and let it

out to husbandmen and went into a strange country. At vintage time he sent his servants to receive the fruits; but the husbandmen ill-treated and killed them. He sent other servants, and they did to them in like manner. Last of all he sent his son, and he, too, was killed (*Matt. xxi*).

Petition.—That I may never reject God's claims, as the Jews did.

FIRST POINT.—This great parable, so pregnant with meaning, was uttered in the last week of Our Lord's life, its terrible indictment being leveled at the leaders of the Jewish nation, whose plot against Him was then nearing completion.

The vineyard, planted and protected with so much care, is the Chosen People of God. He had made a hedge about it and dug in it a wine-vat and built a tower and let it out to husbandmen, to these very priests and elders who now sat in the chair of Moses. Age after age had He sent His servants, the prophets, to receive the fruits of His vineyard; but the Jewish leaders had always ill-treated them, "beating one, killing another, stoning another." It had been one long revolt against God's authority, and now it was to reach its climax.

How often have I, too, rejected the graces God sent me! What an incorrigible rebel I am!

SECOND POINT.—"And last of all he sent to them his son, saying: They will reverence my son."

This is the final effort of God's love and mercy; if this does not soften these hard hearts there is no hope left.

“But the husbandmen, seeing the son, said among themselves: This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, and we shall have his inheritance.” Awful, indeed, is the power men possess of resisting the grace of God! Christ has been so clearly foretold by the prophets, He is now making such a distinct claim to fulfil in Himself their predictions, He has given such convincing proofs of the justice of that claim, His latest miracle, the raising of Lazarus, is on every tongue, and yet these wretched men shut their eyes obstinately against the light. “Come,” they are saying, “come, let us kill Him. . . . And taking Him they cast Him out of the vineyard and killed Him.” Have I treated Jesus Christ any better?

THIRD POINT.—These scribes and pharisees were inexcusable. They knew so well what they were doing. We Christians, however, have far more light than they; yet how often and how resolutely we choose to walk in darkness. Christ has died for us and risen from the dead. We believe it all, and still we rebel against Him. “When, therefore, the lord of the vineyard shall come, what will he do to those husbandmen?”

Colloquy with Christ, the Son of God. Miserere, page 383.

MEDITATION LX

THE MARRIAGE OF THE KING'S SON

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—"The kingdom of heaven is likened to a king who made a marriage for his son." They that were invited to the marriage would not come, so the poor were gathered in from the streets and byways (*Matt.* xxii).

Petition.—Not to refuse God's gracious invitation to holiness.

FIRST POINT.—This parable, like the last, was meant primarily for the Jews. It shows how the blessings they held so cheap passed from them to the Gentiles. Yet we Christians often act just as they did.

The feast is ready, and we, the invited guests, are notified; but we neglect and go our ways, "one to his farm and another to his merchandise." We are too much in love with this world to care for a place at God's table. We do not really want heaven at all, but should be quite content to live on this earth for ever. Here we have made our nest and we have no wish to be disturbed. We may not go so far as to lay hands on God's servants and put them to death; but we refuse to listen to their message. The thought of that heavenly banquet is oppressive to our carnal nature; we

would gladly yield our places to others; and we shall be taken at our word.

SECOND POINT.—“Then the king saith to his servants: The marriage indeed is ready; but they that were invited were not worthy. Go ye, therefore, into the highways, and as many as you shall find call to the marriage.”

The Jews having rejected His loving invitation, Christ now sends His disciples into the highways of the world. They are henceforth to “teach all nations,” to “preach the Gospel to every creature.”

“And his servants, going forth, gathered together all they found, both bad and good, and the marriage was filled with guests.” Our Saviour has taught the same truth in the parable of the wheat and the cockle and again in that of the dragnet. Wheat and cockle are to grow together till harvest-time, the good and bad fish caught in the net are to be separated at the end of the fishing: “So shall it be at the end of the world. The angels shall go out and shall separate the wicked from among the just” (*Matt.* xiii. 49).

The Church on earth therefore is not like that in heaven; but, being made up of bad men as well as good, can not help but suffer from the sins of her children. “It must needs be,” says Our Lord, “that scandals come; but nevertheless woe to him by whom the scandal cometh” (*Matt.* xviii. 7).

So when we read of such sad things in history or witness them with our own eyes we should not love and revere Holy Church one whit the less; for she is still dear as ever to Christ, and when He will He can cleanse away the filth wherewith her false children defile her.

THIRD POINT.—“And the king went in to see the guests, and he saw there a man who had not on a wedding garment; and he saith to him: Friend, how camest thou hither not having on a wedding-garment?”

Considering how these guests had been raked out of the gutters, it seems, at first sight, rather severe to demand that they should appear in festive raiment. Why, then, did not this man defend himself? “Yet he was silent.” All the others are clad handsomely, probably in robes furnished at their host’s expense; why is not he? No wonder he has nothing to say for himself.

Now, the wedding-garment in which we have all to appear is charity, or the grace of God. Faith this man had, or he would not have been admitted into the banquet-hall, but charity he had not. This garment is offered to all; but it may be refused, and if we appear without it that terrible sentence must come upon us: “Bind his hands and feet and cast him into the exterior darkness. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

“For many are called, but few are chosen.”

True, there was only one man cast out; but in the many are included also those who were first invited. Still, not a few were chosen, for the hall was "filled with guests." The words, "few are chosen," are therefore not to be taken absolutely. The number of the elect in every generation is very great; yet they are few compared with the graces poured forth upon mankind and the reward held out to them, few compared with the great price at which they were ransomed, few compared with the multitude of the redeemed, because all have been redeemed, and all ought be saved. God grant I may be among the few!

Colloquy with Jesus, the King's Son. Dies Irae, page 377.

MEDITATION LXI

THE TEN VIRGINS

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—"Then shall the kingdom of heaven be like to ten virgins, who, taking their lamps, went out to meet the bridegroom and the bride. And five of them were foolish and five wise" (*Matt.* xxv).

Petition.—Watchfulness.

FIRST POINT.—"Then," that is, at the last day, of which our Lord has just been speaking. The five foolish virgins took no oil with them; "but the wise

took oil in the vessels with their lamps.” The lamp we may understand to mean faith, the oil good works. Thus we have three things which must go together, virginity, or cleanness of heart, faith, and works. Without faith there can be no good works, nothing, that is, which will deserve a supernatural reward. On the other hand “faith without works is dead” (*James* ii. 26).

Again, as St. Gregory tells us: “Chastity without good works is little; but good works without chastity are nothing.” (*Hom.* xiii. in *Evang.*)

“And, the bridegroom tarrying, they all slumbered and slept”; even the wise dozing, but the foolish sleeping heavily. “And at midnight”—for the Son of man shall come suddenly, “as a thief in the night” (1 *Thess.* v. 2)—“a cry was made: Behold, the bridegroom cometh. Go ye forth to meet him.”

SECOND POINT.—“Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise: Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out. The wise answered: Lest perhaps there be not enough for us and for you, go ye rather to them that sell and buy for yourselves.” In that last hour each of us will have enough to do to look to himself, nor will one be any longer able to help another; for how shall the saint intercede for the sinner when he himself is arraigned before the bar of God’s justice?

“Now whilst they went to buy the bridegroom came, and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut.” Shut, and never to be opened again; for neither shall those without ever pass in, nor those within go out.

“Then at last came also the other virgins, saying: Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answering said: Amen, I say to you, I know you not.”

THIRD POINT.—“Watch ye, therefore, because you know not the day nor the hour.” In a vivid description of the last judgment which introduces this parable our Saviour speaks thus: “As lightning cometh out of the east and appeareth even into the west, so shall the coming of the Son of man be.”

Think what goes before a thunderstorm; the gathering and steady march of livid clouds, the oppressive atmosphere, the deadly stillness. Yet, notwithstanding all these premonitory signs, the first flash of lightning makes you start. Even so will it be at the end of the world. Tribulation and fear, the sun and moon darkened, stars falling from heaven, the sea breaking in upon the land, the sign of the Son of man, the blessed cross—all these our Saviour has foretold; and yet, with so many portents to announce His coming, that coming itself will be lightning-like in its terrific suddenness. “Watch ye, therefore, because you know

not the day nor the hour.” “What I say to you I say to all: Watch!” (*Mark* xiii. 37.)

Colloquy with Jesus, the Bridegroom. *Dies Irae*, page 377.

MEDITATION LXII

THE TALENTS

Preparatory Prayer, as before.

History.—A man going into a far country summons his servants and delivers to them his goods, to one five talents, to another two, to another one, and on his return calls them to account (*Matt.* xxv).

Petition.—Faithful use of God's gifts.

FIRST POINT.—God has bestowed certain natural and supernatural gifts on each one of us “according to his proper ability,” and these gifts are held on trust and are meant to be used. Grace in all its forms is supernatural. Health, wealth, position, abilities, learning, and the like are natural, but can and ought to be directed to a supernatural end, God's glory and the salvation of ourselves and of others.

“And he that received the five talents went his way and traded with the same and gained other five; and in like manner he that had received the two gained other two. But he that had received

the one, going his way, digged into the earth and hid his lord's money." What am I doing with what God has entrusted to me? Am I trading with it or letting it lie idle?

SECOND POINT.—When, "after a long time," their lord returned "he that had received the five talents coming brought other five talents, and he also that had received two brought other two." Then their lord said to each of them: "Well, done, thou good and faithful servant. Because thou hast been faithful over a few things I will place thee over many things. Enter thou into the joy of thy lord."

Here we notice that the same reward is given to each of these servants; for, though God's gifts are allotted in accordance with our ability, the reward is measured by our fidelity in turning them to account.

No matter, then, whether you have received five talents or two or one, you can, if you choose to exert yourself, secure the kingdom of heaven. But if you seem to have no opportunities of doing good, then pray; for by prayer you can convert the heathen and the heretic, protect the Church against her enemies, strengthen the tempted, gain a last grace for the dying, and promote all the interests of God and His Christ. Prayer is a talent which is given to every one, and it is the most potent force in all the world.

THIRD POINT.—“But he that had received the one talent came and said: Lord, I know that thou art a hard man. Thou reapest where thou hast not sown, and gatherest where thou hast not strewed; and, being afraid, I went and hid thy talent in the earth. Behold, here thou hast that which is thine.”

His lord convicts him out of his own mouth: If it is as you say, you ought at least to have committed my money to the bankers. Then you would have incurred no risk and I should have got interest on my capital. “Take ye away, therefore, the talent from him and give it him that hath ten talents. For to every one that hath shall be given; . . . but from him that hath not, that also which he seemeth to have shall be taken away.”

Thus it is that we forfeit the graces we will not use and see them transferred to those who are more faithful. Indeed it is only when we make profit on them that they become ours in any true sense. So long as they lie idle we only seem to possess them, since they may be taken away at any moment.

And it is just that they should be taken away. Is not this exactly how we deal with the undeserving? We are glad to help those who help themselves; but the listless we leave to shift as they may. It is with God's grace as with our food; for just as our food becomes serviceable to us only by

assimilation, and what we can not assimilate does us no good and is rejected by the stomach, or as a limb which is not used becomes atrophied, so grace, if neglected, is withdrawn. "The kingdom of heaven," said Our Lord to the Jews, "shall be taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation yielding the fruits thereof" (*Matt.* xxi. 43).

"And the unprofitable servant cast ye out into the exterior darkness. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." How many a soul has been lost by mere neglect and sloth! God is not a hard master. It is not true to say that He would reap where He has not sown; nay, He sows broadcast and yet in many cases reaps but little. Nevertheless, He demands that the gifts He so generously dispenses be turned to some account, and, while bountiful beyond all words to the honest and loyal, the slothful and ungrateful He must in justice condemn.

Colloquy with Christ our Judge. Te Deum,
page 399.

PRAYERS AND HYMNS FOR COLLOQUIES

AD REGIAS AGNI DAPES

At the Lamb's royal banquet we
In gleaming robes to Christ, our King,
Fresh from His dear, dear blood's red sea,
Triumphant songs of welcome sing.

In truth divine He hath outpoured
From His own veins a loving-cup;
He, the great high priest of the Lord,
His own pure flesh hath offered up.

Angel of Death, go on thy way;
Our doors are purpled with His blood.
Make room for us, wild sea, and slay
Our foes with thine avenging flood.

Our Paschal Lamb this night is slain,
Our saving victim, Christ the Lord.
Our bread unleavened. Free of stain
Be thou who feedest at this board.

O sacred Victim, to Thy sway
The powers of hell perforce bow down;
The bonds of death are sent away
And won through Thee the heavenly crown.

Hail, conquering Christ, whose banner flies
Above the gloomy realms of sin!
Their prince enchained, Thy chariot hies
To open heaven and let us in.

Good Jesus, be for evermore
Our Paschal joy, that we may sing
A psalm of praise Thy throne before,
Where Death is known not nor its sting.

To God the Father glory be,
To God the Son who rose from death,
To God the Spirit, One in Three,
While age on age continueth.

Amen.

AGNUS DEI

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, grant us peace.

ALMA REDEMPTORIS

Mother of our Redeemer, kind of heart,
Wide-open gate to heaven, on life's sea
Our guiding star, help those who trust in thee
To breast the waves would swallow them. Thou
art
The wonder of the world, giving Him birth
Of whom thou hast thy being. Virgin thou
Before and after, take from Gabriel now
His Ave and befriend our sinful Earth.

IN ADVENT

V. The angel of the Lord brought word to Mary.
R. And she conceived of the Holy Ghost.

Let us pray

Pour forth, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy grace into our hearts, that we, to whom the Incarnation of Christ, Thy Son, was made known by the message of an angel, may by His passion and cross be brought to the glory of His resurrection. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

AFTER ADVENT

V. After childbirth, O Virgin, thou wert a maiden still.
R. O Mother of God, intercede for us.

Let us pray

O God, who by the fruitful virginity of blessed Mary hast given to mankind the rewards of eternal life, grant, we beseech Thee, that we may be comforted by her intercession, through whom we have deserved to receive the Author of life, Our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son. Amen.

ANIMA CHRISTI

Soul of Christ, sanctify me.
Body of Christ, save me.
Blood of Christ, inebriate me.
Water from the side of Christ, wash me.
Passion of Christ, strengthen me.
O good Jesus, hear me.
Within Thy wounds hide me.
Permit me not to be torn from Thee.
From the wicked foe defend me.
At the hour of my death call me,
And bid me come to Thee;
That with Thy saints I may praise Thee
For ever and ever.

Amen.

I. Indulgence of 300 days, every time. II. Indulgence of seven years, if said after communion. III. Plenary indulgence, once a month.—PIUS IX, January 9, 1854.

ANIMA CHRISTI

Cardinal Newman's Translation

Soul of Christ, be my sanctification!
Body of Christ, be my salvation!
Blood of Christ, fill all my veins!
Water of Christ's side, wash out my stains!
Passion of Christ, my comfort be!
O good Jesu, listen to me!
In Thy wounds I fain would hide!
Ne'er to be parted from Thy side!
Guard me should the foe assail me.
Call me, when my life shall fail me,
Bid me come to Thee above
With Thy saints to sing Thy love,
World without end. Amen.

DIES IRAE

Day of wrath! That rueful day,
David and the Sybil say,
Shall the world in ruin lay.

How great fear on men will fall
When the almighty Judge of all
For a strict account shall call!

That Last Trump with dreadful groan,
Through entomb-ed nations blown,
Summons all before His throne.

Death and Nature then will quake,
When from their long slumber wake
Hapless men, reply to make.

In yon Doomsday Book contained
Lies the Law by God ordained
Whereon Man must be arraigned.

When our Judge is seated, lo!
Deeds of darkness all will know;
Nothing unavenged shall go.

How may I, poor wretch, endure,
Or of any aid be sure,
When the just feel not secure?

King of majesty divine,
Who so freely savest Thine,
Save me, Fount of love benign.

Jesus, kind, a weary way
Hast Thou sought Thy sheep astray;
Let me not be lost that day.

Faint with Thy long travail, nailed
On the Cross—can all have failed?
So great labor naught availed?

Thou whose vengeance wields the sword,
Ere that day by Thine award
Me reprieve, most upright Lord.

How should tears defend my case,
While my guilt is in my face?
Grant, O God, Thy pitying grace.

Mercy Mary found in Thee
And the thief on Calvary;
Is there, then, no hope for me?

All unworthy though my prayer,
Far too kind art Thou to bear
I should endless torment share.

Let me with Thy sheep abide;
From the goats my lot divide,
Setting me on Thy right side.

When lost souls become the prey
Of those flames that burn away,
With the blessed bid me stay.

Crushed with grief, I lay me here,
Charred to cinders in my fear.
Lord, in that dark hour draw near.

Wild, wild woe will greet that day,
When man, rising from his clay,
Guilty at Thy bar shall plead
Mercy, God, on Adam's seed!

Good Lord Jesus, unto them
Who love Thee give requiem. Amen.

EN EGO

O good and sweetest Jesus, before Thy face I humbly kneel, and with the greatest fervor of spirit I pray and beseech Thee to vouchsafe to fix deep in my heart lively sentiments of faith, hope, and charity, true contrition for my sins, and a most firm purpose of amendment; whilst I contemplate with great sorrow and affection Thy five wounds, and ponder them over in my mind, having before my eyes the words which, long ago, David the prophet spoke in Thy own person concerning Thee, my Jesus: They have pierced my hands and my feet; they have numbered all my bones. (*Ps.* xxi, 17, 18.)

His Holiness, Pope Pius IX, by a decree of the Sacred Congregation of Indulgences, July 31, 1858, following the decrees already issued by his predecessors, confirmed anew the plenary indulgence granted by Clement VIII and Benedict XIV, and confirmed by Pius VII and Leo XII, to those who shall say this prayer. He declared, moreover, that those who wish to gain this plenary indulgence, must say this prayer with devotion before an image or picture of our crucified Redeemer; and, being truly penitent after confession and communion, spend some time in prayer for the intention of the Pope.

GLORIA IN EXCELSIS

Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace to men of good will. We praise Thee; we bless

Thee; we adore Thee; we glorify Thee; we give Thee thanks for Thy great glory, O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father Almighty. O Lord Jesus Christ, only-begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; who takest away the sins of the world, receive our prayers; who sittest at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For Thou alone art holy; Thou alone art Lord; Thou alone, O Jesus Christ, art most high, with the Holy Ghost, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

MAGNIFICAT

My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God, my Saviour.

Because He hath regarded the humility of His handmaid; for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

Because He that is mighty hath done great things to me; and holy is His Name.

And His mercy is from generation unto generations, to them that fear Him.

He hath showed might in His arm; He hath scattered the proud in the conceit of their heart.

He hath put down the mighty from their seat and hath exalted the humble.

He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich He hath sent empty away.

He hath received Israel, His servant, being mindful of His mercy.

As He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed for ever. *Glory be to the Father, etc.*

MEMORARE

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary! that never was it known that any one who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, and sought thy intercession, was left unaided. Inspired with this confidence, I fly unto thee, O Virgin of virgins, my mother! To thee I come; before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word incarnate! despise not my petitions, but, in thy mercy, hear and answer me. Amen.

Indulgence of 300 days, every time; also a plenary indulgence, once a month, to all those, who having said it at least once a day for a month, on any day, being truly penitent, after confession and communion, shall visit a church or public oratory, and pray there, for some time, for the intention of His Holiness.—PIUS IX, Dec. 11, 1846.

DE PROFUNDIS

PSALM CXXIX

Out of the depths I have cried to Thee, O Lord;
Lord, hear my voice.

Let Thy ears be attentive to the voice of my supplication.

If Thou, O Lord, wilt mark iniquities; Lord, who shall stand it?

For with Thee there is merciful forgiveness: and by reason of Thy law, I have waited for Thee, O Lord.

My soul hath relied on His word: my soul hath hoped in the Lord.

From the morning watch even until night let Israel hope in the Lord.

Because with the Lord there is mercy: and with Him plentiful redemption.

And He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

Glory be to the Father, etc.

MISERERE

(Psalm L.)

Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy; and according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies, blot out my iniquity.

Wash me yet more from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin; for I know my iniquity, and my sin is always before me.

To Thee only have I sinned, and have done evil before Thee, that Thou mayst be justified in Thy words, and mayst overcome when Thou art judged.

For behold I was conceived in iniquities; and in sins did my mother conceive me.

For behold Thou hast loved truth. The uncertain and hidden things of Thy wisdom Thou hast made manifest to me.

Thou shalt sprinkle me with hyssop, and I shall be cleansed; Thou shalt wash me, and I shall be made whiter than snow.

To my hearing Thou shalt give joy and gladness; and the bones that have been humbled shall rejoice.

Turn away Thy face from my sins; and blot out all my iniquities.

Create a clean heart in me, O God; and renew a right spirit within my bowels.

Cast me not away from Thy face; and take not Thy holy spirit from me.

Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation; and strengthen me with a perfect spirit.

I will teach the unjust Thy ways; and the wicked shall be converted to Thee.

Deliver me from blood, O God, Thou God of my salvation; and my tongue shall extol Thy justice.

O Lord, Thou wilt open my lips; and my mouth shall declare Thy praise.

For if Thou hadst desired sacrifice, I would indeed have given it; with burnt-offerings Thou wilt not be delighted.

A sacrifice to God is an afflicted spirit; a con-

trite and humbled heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.

Deal favorably, O Lord, in Thy good will with Sion; that the walls of Jerusalem may be built up.

Then shalt Thou accept the sacrifice of justice, oblations and whole-burnt offerings; then shall they lay calves upon Thine altar.

Glory be to the Father, etc.

O DEUS, EGO AMO TE

My God, I love Thee, not that I
May heavenly joy obtain thereby,
Nor that I know who love not Thee
Shall burn in hell eternally.

Thou, Thou, my Jesus, on the tree
With outspread arms hast compassed me
For me hast felt the nails, the spear,
For me hast suffered shame and fear,
And pains and torments manifold,
And sweat of blood from grief untold,
Nay, death itself—and all for me,
A sinner vile as vile can be.

Why, then, sweet Jesus, love not Thee,
Who art so loving unto me?
Not that I may Thy glory see,
Nor hell's eternal torment flee,
Nor any way rewarded be;
But only as Thou hast loved me,

So love I now and will love Thee,
Solely because Thou art my King,
My Lord, my God, my everything.

O HOLY JOSEPH

O Holy Joseph, father and protector of virgins, to whose faithful keeping Innocence itself, Christ Jesus and Mary, the Virgin of virgins, were committed; by these dearest pledges, Jesus and Mary, I beseech and conjure thee to preserve me from all impurity, that I may always serve Jesus and Mary in perfect chastity, with a mind unpolluted, a clean heart, and a chaste body. Amen.

PANGE LINGUA ¹

Sing, O my tongue, devoutly sing
That glorious body's mystery,
And that all-precious blood the King
Of nations hath outpoured, to free
Our world from a disastrous doom.
O blessed fruit of noblest womb!

On us bestowed, for us in birth
From a pure maid He would proceed,
And conversant with men on earth,
Till He had sown the Gospel seed,

¹ From the Primer of 1687, with sundry alterations.

Among them to prolong His stay,
His love invented this strange way.

He on that final supper night

With His dear brethren taking seat,
Observing all the ancient rite

Touching the Law's appointed meat,
Gave to the Twelve, a chosen band,
Himself for food with His own hand.

The Word made flesh by word of might

Turns to His flesh substantial bread,
Wine to His blood, while taste and sight,
Both failing, yet are not misled.

This to confirm in heart sincere,
There needs no more, if faith be clear.

Come, then, this Sacrament adore

And prostrate give the worship due;
And let the ancient rite no more

Have place, but yield unto the new.
Let faith in Jesus Christ supply
Of sense the insufficiency.

To Father and to Son outring

Triumphant praise and jubilee.
Their honor, power, and beauty sing:

Glory for all eternity
To them and to that Spirit bright
Who draws from both His endless light.

Amen.

PSALM XXV

Judge me, O Lord, for I have walked in my innocence: and I have put my trust in the Lord, and shall not be weakened.

Prove me, O Lord, and try me: burn my reins and my heart.

For Thy mercy is before my eyes; and I am well pleased with Thy truth.

I have not sat with the council of vanity; neither will I go in with the doers of unjust things.

I have hated the assembly of the malignant: and with the wicked I will not sit.

I will wash my hands among the innocent: and will compass Thy altar, O Lord.

That I may hear the voice of Thy praise: and tell of all Thy wondrous works.

I have loved, O Lord, the beauty of Thy house: and the place where Thy glory dwelleth.

Take not away my soul, O God, with the wicked; nor my life with bloody men:

In whose hands are iniquities: their right hand is filled with gifts.

But as for me, I have walked in my innocence: redeem me, and have mercy on me.

My foot hath stood in the direct way: in the churches I will bless Thee, O Lord.

Glory be to the Father, etc.

PSALM XLI

As the hart panteth after the fountains of water; so my soul panteth after Thee, O God.

My soul hath thirsted after the strong living God. When shall I come and appear before the face of God?

My tears have been my bread day and night, whilst it is said to me daily: Where is thy God?

These things I remembered, and poured out my soul in me: for I shall go over into the place of the wonderful tabernacle, even to the house of God:

With the voice of joy and praise; the noise of one feasting.

Why art thou sad, O my soul? And why dost thou trouble me? Hope in God, for I will still give praise to Him: the salvation of my countenance, and my God.

My soul is troubled within myself: therefore will I remember Thee from the land of Jordan and Hermoniim, from the little hill.

Deep calleth on deep, at the noise of Thy flood-gates. All Thy heights and Thy billows have passed over me.

In the daytime the Lord hath commanded His mercy: and a canticle to Him in the night. With me is prayer to the God of my life.

I will say to God: Thou art my support. Why hast Thou forgotten me? And why go I mourning, whilst my enemy afflicteth me?

Whilst my bones are broken, my enemies who trouble me have reproached me; whilst they say to me day by day: Where is thy God?

Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why dost thou disquiet me?

Hope thou in God, for I will still give praise to Him: the salvation of my countenance, and my God.

Glory be to the Father, etc.

PSALM XC

He that dwelleth in the aid of the Most High shall abide under the protection of the God of heaven.

He shall say to the Lord: Thou art my protector and my refuge: my God, in Him will I trust.

For He hath delivered me from the share of the hunters: and from the sharp word.

He will overshadow thee with His shoulders: and under His wings thou shalt trust.

His truth shall compass thee with a shield: thou shalt not be afraid of the terror of the night.

Of the arrow that flieth in the day, of the business that walketh about in the dark: of invasion, or of the noonday devil.

A thousand shall fall at Thy side, and ten thousand at Thy right hand: but it shall not come nigh Thee.

But Thou shalt consider with Thy eyes: and shalt see the reward of the wicked:

Because Thou, O Lord, art my hope: Thou hast made the Most High Thy refuge.

There shall no evil come to Thee: nor shall the scourge come near Thy dwelling.

For He hath given His angels charge over Thee, to keep Thee in all Thy ways.

In their hands they shall bear Thee up, lest Thou dash Thy foot against a stone.

Thou shalt walk upon the asp and the basilisk: and Thou shalt trample under foot the lion and the dragon.

Because He hoped in Me I will deliver him. I will protect him because he hath known My name.

He shall cry to Me, and I will hear him: I am with him in tribulation, I will deliver him, and I will glorify him.

I will fill him with length of days: and I will show him My salvation.

Glory be to the Father, etc.

PSALM CXX

I have lifted up my eyes to the mountains, from whence help shall come to me.

My help is from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

May He not suffer thy foot to be moved: neither let Him slumber that keepeth thee.

Behold He shall neither slumber nor sleep, that keepeth Israel.

The Lord is thy keeper: the Lord is thy protection upon thy right hand.

The sun shall not burn thee by day: nor the moon by night.

The Lord keepeth thee from all evil: may the Lord keep thy soul.

May the Lord keep thy coming in and thy going out: from henceforth now and for ever.

Glory be to the Father, etc.

SALVE REGINA

Hail, holy queen, mother of mercy! Hail, our life, our sweetness, and our hope! To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve. To thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this vale of tears. Turn, then, most gracious advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us; and after this our exile show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.

V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray

Almighty, everlasting God, who, by the co-operation of the Holy Ghost, didst so make ready the body and soul of the glorious virgin mother, Mary, that she deserved to become a meet dwelling for Thy Son: grant that we, who rejoice in her memory, may by her loving intercession be delivered from the evils that hang over us, and from everlasting death. Through the same Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

V. May the divine assistance remain always with us.

R. Amen.

THE ANGELUS

V. The angel of the Lord declared unto Mary.

R. And she conceived by the Holy Ghost.

Hail Mary, etc.

V. Behold the handmaid of the Lord.

R. Be it done unto me according to thy word.

Hail Mary, etc.

V. And the Word was made flesh.

R. And dwelt among us.

Hail Mary, etc.

Let us pray

Pour forth, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy grace into our hearts; that as we have known the incar-

nation of Christ, Thy Son, by the message of an angel, so, by His passion and cross, we may be brought to the glory of His resurrection; through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

REGINA COELI

O Queen of heaven, great joy to thee, Alleluia;
For Jesus Christ who deigned to be, Alleluia,
Thy child is risen as He said, Alleluia.
Pray bless all for whom He bled, Alleluia.
V. Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, Alleluia;
R. For the Lord is risen indeed, Alleluia.

Let us pray

O God, who didst vouchsafe to give joy to the world through the resurrection of Thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, grant, we beseech Thee, that through His Mother, the Virgin Mary, we may obtain the joys of everlasting life. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

SLEEP, HOLY BABE

Sleep, Holy Babe!
Thine Angels watch around,
All bending low, with folded wings,
Before the Incarnate King of kings,
In reverent awe profound.

Sleep, Holy Babe!
While I with Mary gaze
In joy upon that face awhile;
Upon the loving infant smile
Which there divinely plays.

Sleep, Holy Babe!
Ah, take Thy brief repose.
Too quickly will Thy slumbers break,
And Thou to lengthened pains awake,
That death alone shall close.

Then must those hands
Which now so fair I see,
Those little pearly feet of Thine,
So soft, so delicately fine,
Be pierced and rent for me.

Then must that brow
Its thorny crown receive;
That cheek, more lovely than the rose,
Be drenched with blood and marred with
blows,
That I thereby may live.

O Lady blest!
Sweet Virgin, hear my cry.
Forgive the wrong that I have done
To thee in causing thy dear Son
Upon the cross to die.

STABAT MATER ¹

Under the world-redeeming tree
Stood Christ's dear Mother, silently
Mingling her tears with His red sea.

In His deep woe she bore her part,
Of all His wounds she felt the smart;
What pierced His body pierced her heart.

Full heavy and full sad was she
As thus she stood 'neath that rood tree;
Her child, her only child, was He.

With breaking heart she turns her eyes
Upon the Lord of earth and skies,
Where nailed upon the cross He dies.

Who is so hardened, who so cold,
As can with tearless eyes behold
This Mother's grief so manifold?

Can see her mourning with her Son,
Victim of deeds He hath not done,
And feel no pity? None, oh none.

For His own guilty race He bleeds,
All torn with scourges for their needs;
With His last breath for them He pleads.

¹ The ninth verse and two lines in the second are from the Primer of 1687.

Her well-beloved, uncomforted,
Bows down His weary thorn-crowned head,
And there she stands till He is dead.

All-loving Mother, teach my heart
Of sighs and tears the holy art,
That in thy grief I may have part.

With thy pure love my soul inflame,
That I thy Jesus' love may claim,
Who bore for me this bitter shame.

And grant me this, sweet Mother mine,
That sorrow on my heart may sign
The wounds of this dear Son of thine.

Share thou with me the cruel woe
Of every jibe and every blow
He shared with thee who loved me so.

Give me to weep sad tears as we
Stand side by side on Calvary,
Proving my life-long sympathy.

For all I ask is here to stay,
To be with Christ and thee alway,
To weep and weep, to pray and pray.

Virgin of virgins, turn not thou
In anger from my pleading now
When I my bitter grief avow.

To bear Christ's death about with me,
Like the good thief, with Him to be
Nailed on the cross is my one plea.

To share the blows that on Him fall,
Drink of His vinegar and gall—
Nay, His dear blood—this, this is all.

And on the great accounting-day
For thy poor child a good word say,
That then I be not cast away.

O Christ, when that last hour draws near;
For her sweet sake who loved Thee dear,
Give me a heart that knows no fear.

Though in the grave my body lie,
My soul, my soul shall never die,
But to Thy feet, dear Saviour, fly.

Amen.

SUME, DOMINE

Take, O Lord, and accept all my liberty, my memory, my understanding and my whole will, all that I am, all that I possess. All these things Thou hast given me, and to Thee, O Lord, I give them back again. They are all Thine own; do with them just what Thou pleasest. Give me Thy love and Thy grace; for this is all I need.

TE DEUM

We praise Thee, O God. We acknowledge Thee to be the Lord.

Thee, the Father everlasting, all the earth doth worship.

To Thee all the angels, to Thee the heavens and all the powers,

To Thee the cherubim and seraphim cry out without ceasing:—

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of hosts.

Full are the heavens and the earth of the majesty of Thy glory.

Thee the glorious choir of the apostles,

Thee the admirable company of the prophets,

Thee the white-robed army of martyrs doth praise.

Thee the holy Church throughout the world doth confess.

The Father of incomprehensible majesty.

Thy adorable, true, and only Son,

And the Holy Ghost, the Paraclete.

Thou, O Christ, art the King of glory.

Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father.

Thou, having taken upon Thee to deliver man, didst not disdain the Virgin's womb.

Thou, having overcome the sting of death, hast opened to believers the kingdom of heaven.

Thou sittest at the right hand of God in the glory of the Father.

Thou, we believe, art the Judge to come.

We beseech Thee, therefore, to help Thy servants, whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy precious blood.

Make them to be numbered with Thy saints in glory everlasting.

O Lord, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance;

And govern them and exalt them for ever.

Day by day we bless Thee,

And we praise Thy Name for ever; yea, for ever and ever.

Vouchsafe, O Lord, this day to keep us without sin.

Have mercy on us, O Lord, have mercy on us.

Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us, as we have trusted in Thee.

In Thee, O Lord, have I trusted; let me not be confounded for ever.

VENI, SANCTE SPIRITUS

Come, Holy Spirit, in Thy might;

Pour forth from heaven Thy cheering light,

To guide our wandering feet aright.

Come, Father of the friendless poor,
Giver of good gifts, come and cure
Our folly with Thy wisdom sure.

Best Comforter, right welcome guest,
Brood as the dove upon her nest
Here in our hearts and give them rest.

For rest to them that toil art Thou,
In noonday heat a shady bough,
And mirth upon the moody brow.

O ever-blessed Light, outpour
On those who trust Thee evermore
Thy gifts, Thy graces, as of yore.

Without Thy help there is in man
Nor force to think aright nor plan;
Evil is all he knows or can.

Wash Thou the filth of sin away,
Freshen once more our barren clay,
With healing grace our wounds allay.

Bend the hard will to what is true,
The cold heart warm, and pilot through
The drifting craft to waters blue.

Not in the spirit of the slave,
But with hope set beyond the grave
Thy seven choice gifts of Thee we crave.

High courage to Thy servants send,
Safe passage on the way we wend,
And heaven at our long journey's end.

Amen. Alleluia.

VEXILLA REGIS

Abroad the regal banners fly;
Gleams from the cross its mystery,
Whereon dear Life would death endure
And by His death our life secure.

Rent by a spear, our souls to lave,
His side wells forth a crimson wave;
Not crimson all, that mystic flood
Flowing as water after blood.

All the great prophet-king of old
Hath in his truthful song foretold
Is come to pass; for, lo, we see
God rule the nations from a tree.

Fair tree, whose foliage divine
Doth all in royal purple shine,
Chosen those sacred limbs to bear
That render thee so wondrous fair.

Fair tree, whose happy branches bore
The wealth that doth our world restore!

His precious body hung on thee
Who conquered hell and set us free.

Hail, Cross, of all our hope the spring!
While to our dead Lord's feet we cling,
By His dear love we humbly plead
For grace and pardon in our need.

AT EASTERTIDE

Hail, Cross, of all our hope the spring,
Sweet Easter joys awakening!
By Christ's dear love we humbly plead
For grace and pardon in our need.

Thee, mighty God, may all adore,
Life's fountainhead for ever more!
Cross-led through death's triumphal gate,
Be our reward exceeding great.

Amen.

VICTIMAE PASCHALI

To your Paschal Lamb this day,
Christians all, glad homage pay.
For the sheep the Lamb is slain,

Christ the innocent, to win
Lasting peace with God again

For a race defiled with sin.
Death hath closed in mortal strife
With the everlasting Life,

And the Lord of life in death
Liveth still and conquereth.
Tell us, Mary, on thy way
What thou findest. I behold
That sad tomb wherein He lay
And the cloth did Him enfold;
But of Him the angels say,
Gleaming with unearthly light,
He is risen in His might.
Christ, my hope, doth live and He
Waits you all in Galilee.
Yea, we know our King doth reign,
Never to taste death again.
None shall plead to Him in vain.
Amen. Alleluia.

O SALUTARIS HOSTIA

O Saving Victim, opening wide
The gate of heav'n to man below!
Our foes press on from every side;
Thine aid supply, Thy strength bestow.

To Thy great name be endless praise,
Immortal Godhead, One in Three;
Oh, grant us endless length of days,
In our true native land with Thee. Amen.

THE BENEDICTUS

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, because He hath visited and wrought the redemption of His people;

And hath raised up a horn of salvation to us in the house of David His servant;

As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets, who are from the beginning:

Salvation from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us.

To perform mercy to our fathers, and to remember His holy testament.

The oath which he swore to Abraham our father, that he would grant to us.

That being delivered from the hand of our enemies, we may serve Him without fear,

In holiness and justice before Him all our days.

And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest; for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways:

To give knowledge of salvation to His people, unto the remission of their sins;

Through the bowels of the mercy of our God, in which the Orient from on high hath visited us.

To enlighten them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death; to direct our feet in the way of peace.

Glory be to the Father, etc.

PREPARATORY PRAYER

Grant us, O God our Lord, Thy grace, that all our intentions, actions, and operations may be ordained purely to the service and praise of Thy divine majesty, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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